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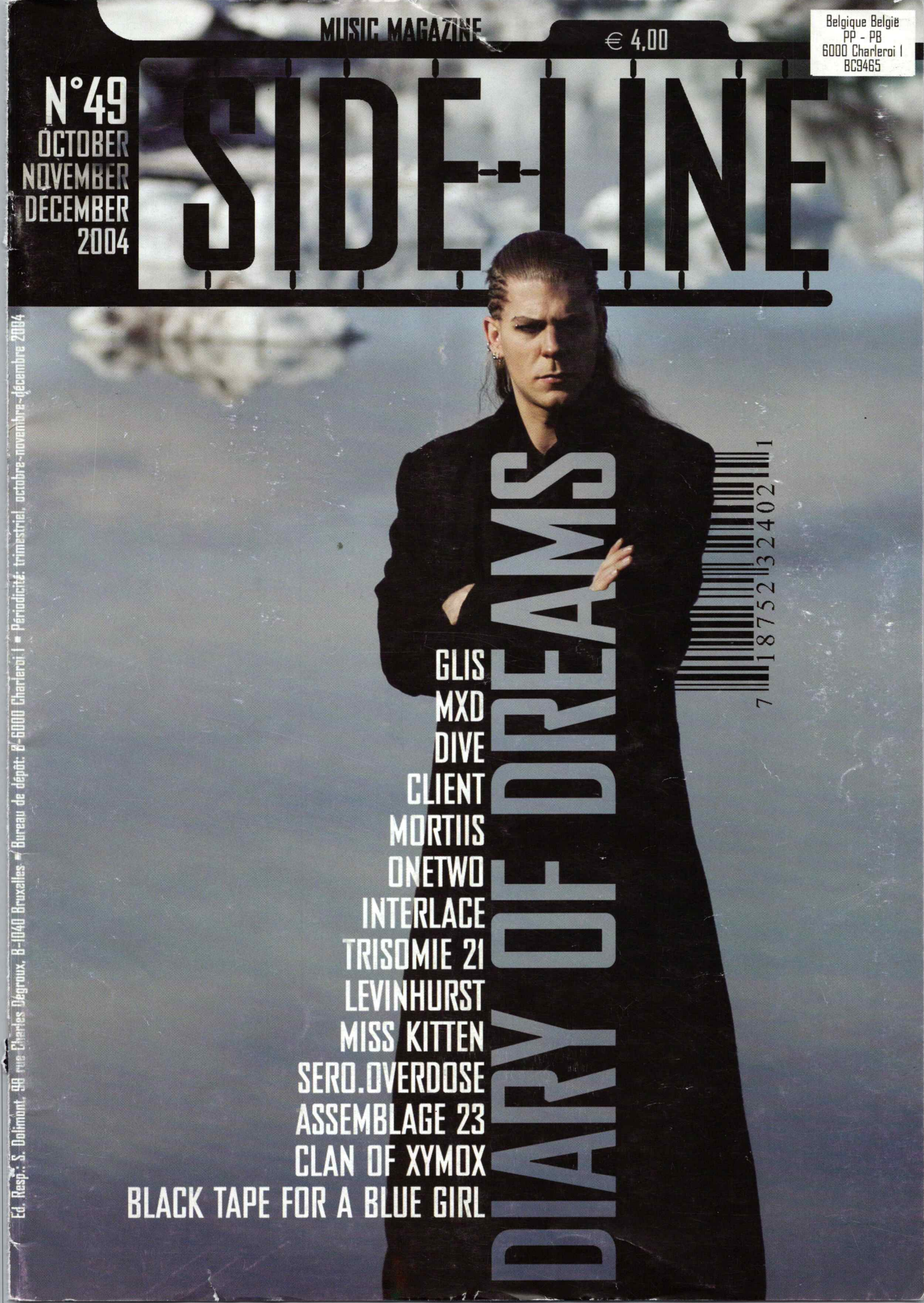
SIDE-LINE



DIARY OF DREAMS

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Diary of Dreams

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Nigredo

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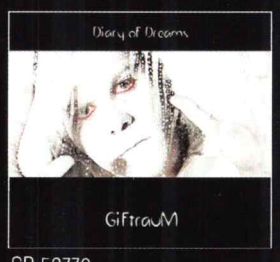

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SIDE-LINE N°49 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2004

Do bands in this scene still need labels? It is a question that has jumped to my mind on several occasions in the past few months. And after checking pros and cons, the answer remains a solid 'yes'. Given the fact that only a few bands are able to sell their name product-wise in large enough quantities to be able to pull their releases and sales in the right direction, it is a fact and certainty that for most of the other bands a future without a label would be disastrous and surely mean the end of their existence. Sure, there is the internet, but you can count the bands that have a solid and vast database of customers on just one hand. Even better, you can count the labels that do serve their customers online in a fashionable way on that same hand. ✖✖✖ Do bands need magazines? After reading the above you can only but say: more than ever! But the way magazines are organised today often make them not really to be the best instrument to reach people. Why? What most magazines lack is an interaction with their readers, with their public. How many magazines do you know with an active presence online where thousands are reached each day? How many magazines do you know that can contact thousands with just one click of a button? How many magazines can identify their readers? Think about it and you will quickly realise that only a very few have seen the light. ✖✖✖ And let me say that this is outrageous in a time where there are so many (cheap) ways to reach your readers. For too long it was fashionable to leave the internet as a simple window for the magazine without any serious interaction. While the others stay dormant, some magazines and in result some labels are gradually but surely taking the lead when it comes in direct communication with their fanbase. In a way, this modus operandi ensures that this scene is still linked together in a world where it has become very expensive to reach people in a proper way. These magazines and labels will be the new leading force to push this scene forward and keep it afloat in an environment were there is no longer the comfort of certainty and where even the brightest future could easily be turned into a sure nightmare. ✖✖✖ Am I pessimistic? No, I'm just being realistic. Fact remains that many bands, labels and magazines have seriously missed the internet train by tossing it all on the pile of the e-bubblegum. Just imagine that you want to reach a few thousand people right now, this instant moment. Many labels, bands and magazines simply will have to say: we don't know… It should be clear and evident to all that with vast databases of customers this kind of cross-promotion will become much easier. In a way we will be helping out each other much more. ✖✖✖ However, don't forget, a chain is only as strong as it's weakest link and the weak link in the whole network are the many that have refused embracing the new technologies, that have remained in their closet out of fear to loose control. It's time for these people to take up their responsibility and start making their link stronger. Together we are stronger. ✖✖✖ With Side-Line we have always foreseen this and have always pushed to get the scene united as much as possible; it's not a coincidence that with over 25.000 registered members and customers, we exactly know where the force of direct communication lays. It's no coincidence that so many labels have embraced our daily news on www.side-line.com to ventilate their latest news, it's no coincidence that we get daily request to help us promoting releases and bands and with success. Today we have the unique privilege to select what kind of news will be added online and in this magazine and what will not. Based on the interest of news items, on the partnerships with labels and bands and one common sense you get a mixed and informative news section. Side-Line is always open for partnering and communication, but it has to come from both sides. Firing at random to get at least one hit but heaps of misses is no option. Labels, bands and magazines that do not see this evidence will not last and are busy writing their very own epitaph. ✖✖✖ Join us now on www.side-line.com and meanwhile enjoy this last issue of 2004. Rendezvous next year!

Bernard Van Isacker - chief editor @ Side-Line

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DIARY OF DREAMS

volcanic beaches on icelandic plains

More than two years after their last full album "Freak Perfume", the German act Diary Of Dreams return with should be their most important and impressive opus ever: "Nigredo". Based upon ancient mythology and myths, an own world and history was created, that has no good intention with humanity. A dark and angry world seems to have taken the heart of Diary Of Dreams. Side-Line went to talk with Adrian Hates, the enigmatic frontman of this cultband, and revealed more than other interviews ever did...

What was the main idea behind the "Nigredo" album?

AH • Basically we wanted to erase the last little bit of friendliness that was still there in Diary Of Dreams. It had to be an extremely dark record and by developing that musical concept we stumbled over a few very rare and seldom parts of history and mythology that led to a background story that started to appear. So we went to libraries and antiquarian bookshops in order to find out more. All these conceptual ideas were put together in one single story. So it is based on real mythologies and partially our imagination and fantasies, a collage you might say of different stories and different people's mind. I can't say what really triggered it, we didn't sit down and say 'let's make up a mythologie'! It was partly coincidental that things popped up and jumped to us. For example the number five, which is really important number, is present as well, but that's all explained in the limited edition that we are busy making. We also added a 60 pages booklet with all the background stories, definitions and explanations of how to understand the story. The fans can really and find out what the lyrics are about, it should clarify things because the lyrics are pretty difficult without any backing.

That must have been one hell of a job, how do you structure this, or do the songs have a fix number that you need to follow?

AH • No, you can turn the tracks around at your own wish. In fact the album is more like coordinated chaos because surely from the content from the songs you can put them anywhere. My head is chaos as well...

What is the story about in short?

AH • The story is told through the perspective of the main character Catarsia, we call this person 'the searching one'. He is a person that looks for a solution of his personality not feeling complete and he is without knowing part of a concept of five personalities. These five personalities are the origin of a virus and only these five persons together can cause this virus to exist. And he, without knowing, completes the circle and then the virus destroys human life, called 'the blackening', the translation of the word 'nigredo' in fact. It is a very sad and pessimistic view but it is partly a warning, partly a very sad but nice story, like a fable really. You can draw parallels to my life but you can also draw parallels to the human life in general. I think that is the best way to putting it. Of course the whole story is a lot more complex than just this shortened version I'm telling you now because all five persons are explained, what are their roles, what does the virus do to the world and so on.

In what way does it hold parallels to your own life then?

AH • What I always said is that I consider my life to be a search for harmony. I think a lot of religions and perspectives in life that humans have can be led back to a search for harmony. It's my personal interpretation, the human being is born in harmony but loses this in the course of his life. And the rest of his life he spends to find it back.

Have you completed that quest for harmony already?

AH • No, not at all. And I don't know how I can achieve it because there is no recipe for it. For me personally piece in mind and harmony will be an automatic response or reaction as soon as certain things have happened in my life such as making a split from what I am and where I want to go to. Moving away really. It could be interpreted as running away and partially that's perhaps true, but internal feelings and emotions are only something that you can tell for yourself, they don't depend on rules that other people make. If your feelings tell you that you have to do something else than you have to do something else.

And your feelings tell you what right now?

AH • They tell me that I have to spend more time with music and spend less time in my office. It is also the reason why we dropped some bands on Accession Records or let them go away. My new recipe is focus and that is the recipe for the next years. The music market these days forces us to give a 1000% or even more to sell half the amount of copies compared to five or six years ago. That's why I wanted to concentrate on those bands that value the work and enthusiasm that their label has for them. We are fighters at Accession Records to get the best result we can for the bands. It's not easy especially these days.

How much of an importance was the bankruptcy of EFA in the whole of this?

AH • Aaaaargh, a pain in the ass but not really an influence. Okay, I lost a lot of money, a small fortune really and I know that I will never get that money back either. But we can be happy that it happened now and not a year later or we would all have died. The whole EFA thing was just a chaos and disaster in the last year, but we all realized it soon enough and had time to search for alternatives in order to limit the damage as good as possible. We talked to every distributor in Germany and found that Indigo was the right partner for us. They also have the enthusiasm we have as well and they are willing to fight just like us. You know, it is easy to whine and bitch and say that it is not right to steal the music, but that won't change it. You have to fight and convince people instead of blaming them.

What kind of solution do you see then? Selling CDs directly online like you do now?

AH • That's one thing. The whole distribution dependence between labels, distributors and stores has to change. In my eyes you have to change the whole policy of releasing CDs. We have tried to change the price policy of stores, but they just don't want to follow. It's not that the label can say that we want this CD in the shops for 9 euros, because the stores just say 'fuck you!'. There are tons of political things that especially big chains do. I think that a CD priced at 12.99 EURO or at 13.99 EURO is not too expensive. When I used to buy CD's I paid them at 25 DM, which is exactly the same standard price. But... it has to be a quality CD and that is in my eyes the most important thing. You can't just deliver a CD with 55 minutes of playing time without full quality, good production and a nice packaging. Labels have to stop selling CDs in a jewel box with a 2 page booklet because then a CD-R is just as nice. Convince peo-

The first volume holding rare Funker Vogt material will be released in November on RepoRecords. To be released under the title of "Always and Forever" it will be a double CD in a digipak, containing the first three single, EP's ("Words Of Power", "Take Care" and "Killing Time Again") and 9 unpublished songs and remixes. ✖✖✖ Kaleidoskop, the Minuswelt sublabel, will release The Rorschach Garden's first full length CD, "Same". After several vinyl releases this debut CD features 18 of retro-minimal-electro tracks recorded since 1997. The Rorschach Garden was started by P.Muench (Synapscape, Ars Moriendi...) as a one-man project in 1988. While sounding first like ambient, industrial and avantgarde, in 2001 T.R.G. went into the synth-pop and minimal electro direction. On this CD, you will find unreleased tracks along with selected material that was previously available only on vinyl ("State protection" being one of them). Also included is a cover version: "25 years" by The Catch. ✖✖✖ Melotron have started working on their new album. The recording sessions for the yet untitled follow-up to their 2003 album "Sternenstaub" will start in September. Still according to the band, the new material would probably be finished at the end of the year with a release set for late spring of 2005. ✖✖✖ "Status" is the new 2CD album for E-Craft out on Electric Blue records at the end of September. On "Status" you'll find both new exclusive tracks, exclusive mixes, unreleased live-cuts, all their hits and a lot of rare tracks, all of which have been unavailable on the market for years. ✖✖✖ The brand new Hypnoskull album "Dark skies over planet e." will be out in October 2004. The album contains 16 new tracks and an additional bonus 6-track twelve inch entitled "Urban territory intruders" which features collaboration tracks with the following projects: Defragmentation (USA), Needle Sharing (G), Sickboy (B), The Mike Van Raspaarden Quartet (B), Urban Punk Assassin (B) and Act Dramatik (B). The album also includes the "100 test channels" track for which Hypnoskull asked 100 people to send in 5 seconds of audio. The result is a collection of field-recordings, sounds, noises from whole around the world in just one track. For the fashion freaks amongst you all, the cloths the band members wear on the coverpicture are by the well-known Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonck. ✖✖✖ Anarchy has struck again in the Sheep On Drugs camp. In a statement the band says "Well, well, well, 2004 has been a bitch to date... To start, Lee had to sack all other members of the band (no balls) in January and start again from scratch....a lot of time consuming bollox!" In further comments the band announces that they have completed the recording of the new album. The material is described as being 'dark, sleazy and sick'. The band will now mix the material and start the hunt for a record label. ✖✖✖ U2 have recorded a cover of Kraftwerk's "Neon Lights" to be included as one of the B-sides on their new single, "Vertigo", to be released on 8 November. The U2 version of the electronic track was produced by Steve Lillywhite and recorded at Dublin'ss Hanover Quay Studios. The single also features another brand new track, "Are You Gonna Wait Forever?". The single will be released on November 8th in two CD-singles formats and a DVD single, featuring a video for "Vertigo" directed by Richie Smyth and all-new shots of the band taken in Lisbon recently by Anton Corbijn. ✖✖✖ "Wrack And Ruin", the new album for Hocico out on Out of Line will be available as a limited 2CD box set as well as a limited 2LP vinyl box set. The Limited Edition 2CD version of "Wrack And Ruin" comes in a regular double CD jewel box housed within a glossy cardboard box with hinged lid while and holds 4 bonus tracks: "Violencia (Religion De Hoy)", "Pentaprisma", "Spirits Of Crime (Bestializtik Mix By DL)" and "La Cara De La Muerte". ✖✖✖ On 18 December 2004, Hof Ter Lo in Antwerp (BE) will be hosting the 3rd edition from the Belgian Independent Music Festival. Playing at the fest will be Militia (B), The Dawn Visitors (B), Companions In Art (B), Basscamp Wolf (B), Pressure Control (B) (feat. ex-Vomito Negro Gin Devo), Ah Cama-Sotz (B), Parade Ground (B) (exclusive reunion gig, first show after 15 years), Sonar (B), Portion Control (UK) (electro-industrial pioneers reunited, exclusive belgian gig), Trisomie 21(FR) (exclusive belgian reunion gig, first show after 12 years), Aroma Di Amore(B) (exclusive reunion gig, first show after 11 years). Tickets will soon be available at FNAC, www.DarkEntries.be and more to be announced. Ticket prices: Pre-sale: € 25 / Door: € 30. The festival website will be online in a few days.

ple to buy a CD because the CD is worth it. The CD needs to be worth the price. Lowering the price but keeping the same bullshit quality is no competition to the CD-Rs. Naturally in the future we will all have problems as sales will still go down and we will most probably evolve to digital download formats only... which I hope won't be true but it all looks like this is going to be the case. I foresee that but then we need to consider if we sell only online, but that would be a shame.

You don't really have a big trust in humanity considering that human contact can cause destruction like you explained just now...

AH • Of course this is all a philosophical attempt... You know, I'm not a very constructive person concerning the human species in general. I don't like the human mind very much, although yes, people are buying my records (laughs). But rest assured, I'm surrounded by people that I like very much and who I value. But let's say I'm not a fan of a social life, I like to be by myself. I prefer the company of animals to be honest....

I have never seen animals buying Diary Of Dream records!

AH • (Laughs) Damn, I hadn't thought of that, maybe I should change my perspectives! But then again, they don't steal music either... (laughs)! This whole thing is very philosophical, it's not that I mind the human existence, I'm part of it so it would be kind of stupid thinking that. I just like to be away from it all. Let's compare it on a different level. Some people like to live in the country, by themselves, while others prefer the city where everybody lives close to each other. I like to be very remote and when I confront myself to human beings, it's because that is my choice, not because I'm confronted by it. In the past ten years it has become more obvious that the time I spent by myself is also the time that I like the most. On the other hand, keep in mind that the first reason why I make music is because I make it for myself. That's why I never make compromises, I do it as I think I will like it, not the way that I hope others will like it. You know that is a big difference... Selling CDs to people, making sure that it looks nice and being successful is a total different thing. But sharing the material with others can result in finding people that share your ideas. And you would be surprised I think... 'Not liking' is not like hate, it's not like I'd love to erase the human kind, but I just like to be away from it... But I know you play the devil's advocate here!

Exactly! By the way, do you live in the countryside?

AH • No, but I will be soon. I live behind the house where the countryside starts, but not in the city.

How does Accession Records and Diary Of Dreams have an influence on your life?

AH • Well, that's an interesting question as my daily life only consists of Accession Records and Diary Of Dreams. This year I can count on one hand the days and weekend I had without work: there were none. The last weekend without work... I can't remember. Either I make music or I sit in the office, so... That's my life! There is a lot of pleasure to it and lots of fun, but there is also a lot to fight and struggle against, like with the EFA lawyers that at some point you think if it is all really worth it. You invest tons of money and then people don't pay you back. At such moments you really start to wonder what is fair and what is not because we didn't deserve to be treated like that. But then again, life is not about fairness, right (grins)! You just have to continue and fight your way through it, that is my policy.

Does this influence the way you handle bands, do they feel the struggle you are fighting each day?

AH • Let me put it this way: luckily enough we are with 4 people in the office and what we are trying to do is being available for our artists at any moment of the day. They are more like family to us, when bands want to call us in the middle of the night, no problem. We have a lot of great bands and great personalities. They are an equal part to us and that is something I really value, they inspire us. I don't want to sit here as the boss and acting like it and tell other people what to do. We have to find a common way in coordination and discussion with each other. We really want to bring the bands to a next level.

You are in the lucky position that you have nothing left to prove!

AH • Yeah (laughs)! It is not like that I sit here and that I need to do this or that to feel better afterwards.

Would you consider yourself to be somebody who has calculated dreams, having the fact that dreams play an important part in your life as you said on more than one occasion in the past...

AH • Calculated? No, I write them down, but I wouldn't say that they are calculated... Sometimes my dreams are very clear and sometimes they are very unclear but especially these latter ones can reveal to be very inspiring. It's mostly the atmospheres and strange situations about visions and things that I see. Then I write it down as soon as I wake up. But these are never musically political things or so. It's not like that I wake up and think "Oh god, I have to write Tommy Shear an e-mail!", because that is stuff that is on my list of things to do. It's more in the creative way that it plays a role. I guess that my daily routine, where the time that is dominated by office work, causes my creative part to break through in my dreams.

Some people say you are a control freak...

AH • (Laughs) I know, I know... It is more a myth than a true thing. But when I started, I was on my own and I noticed that often when you give things out of hand, people just fuck it up. And the time you spend on repairing these things that other people mess up, can be used for other things. So instead of spending twice as much time with getting messed up things repaired, I preferred doing it myself. Of course I messed up things myself, but then at least I knew it was my own fault. And that was the original motivation of doing everything myself. But having said that, the control freak nowadays is in fact a group of 10 people that I value and trust, it goes from my graphic designer, to my booking agent. They all form a team that together is this control freak. Being a solo control freak now would be a killer... But indeed at the end of the day I am the boss.

Did this ever frighten you?

AH • That's a difficult question you know... I started up the company and put years of my life in it. So it's hard to say it. I never considered it, it is just this kind of chain of events thing that takes place and you just absorb and accept it. It's just there and the things happened as they do. I never considered it to be a risk, more a calculated risk. You have to consider if it's suicidal or calculable. But then again, let's face it, you know as well as me that the whole music industry is more or less a gamble, a record can make it or be a total flop. You need to train yourself a bit so that you can deal with risky business. When I invest money in a band, I might take a risk because I might loose money. But on the other hand I can say that I wanted this record to be heard, so in the end it is not all lost after all because I did at least this. Luckily we do not loose too much money on our records.

Is this something you plan to continue to do in the next 10 years?

AH • I hope so, why not? I do not plan to do anything else but music in the next years for my living and my life. I look at it as being a passion and not as work. I love it and I am good at it!

Btw, I wondered how you came up with the location of Iceland for the photo shoot?

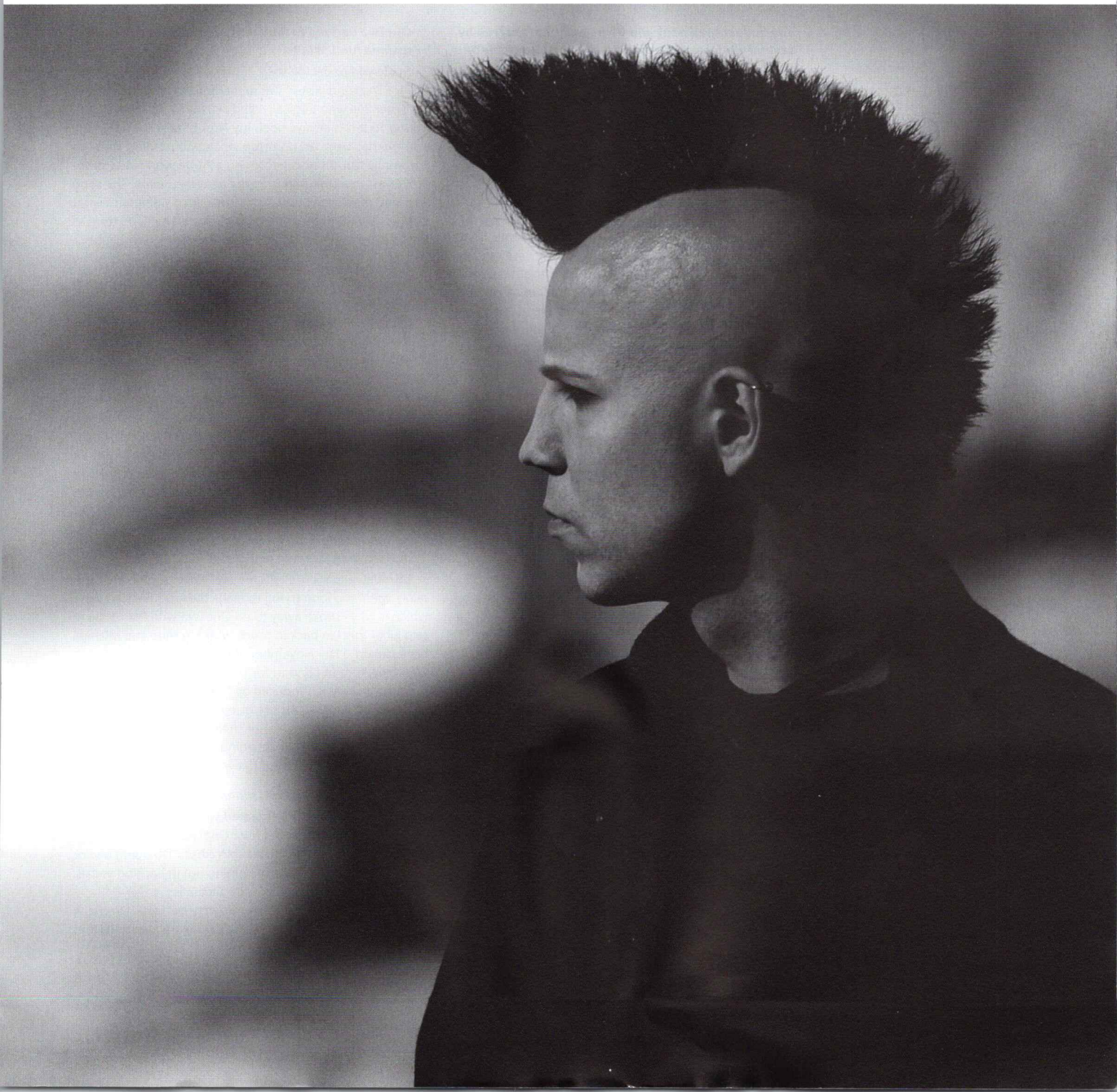
AH • Well, last year we sat together and discussed what would be a good location to make the pictures for the new album as we wanted anything but regular looks. Nothing about the record was supposed to be standard or regular. It had to be unexpected. In the end both for me and my photographer Silke, Iceland was the best choice, I always wanted to visit the country but never had the opportunity to do

so. So this was the opportunity to do so and make pictures in that absolutely stunning landscape. It took us a couple of weeks to organize it as we had to take care of all the technical equipment. We had banners and flags with us and metal stands to attach them, it was just chaos. We traveled with six people, rented a Landrover and drove 4.500 miles in six days, I'm not kidding! But it is so wonderful, it's the most intense atmosphere I have ever seen. There is so much, it's unreal, for example what is more beautiful for a gothic heart than a black volcano beach while the waves break in on the shore. And the plains, well, you had this very soft grass growing there as far as you could see... it was soft like a bed. The complete center of the isle is just ice... it was really impressive and it overwhelmed me completely.

A DVD would even do the album more justice judging from your enthusiasm, but that would have taken you too long I guess?

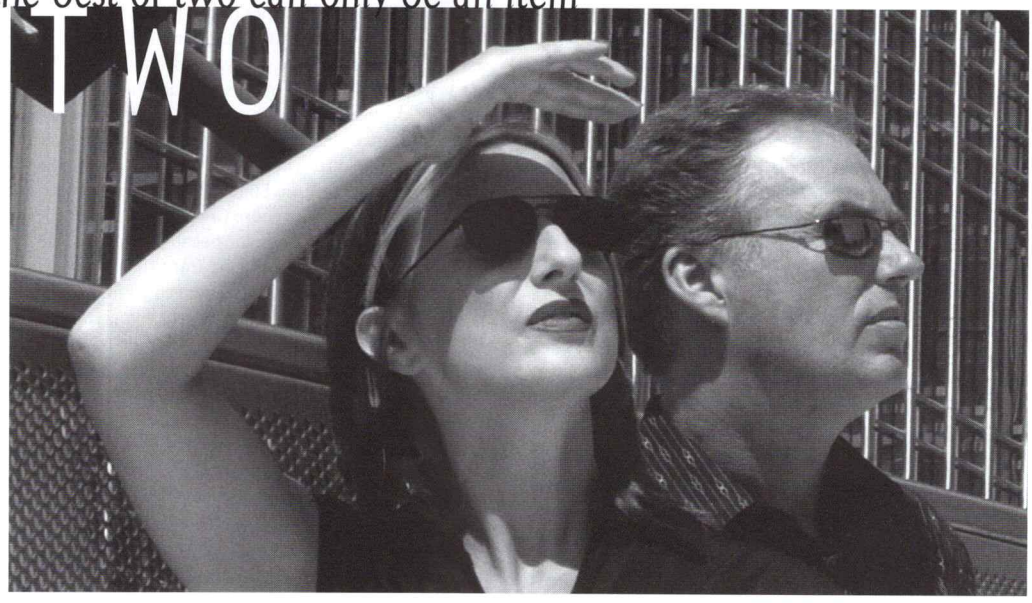
AH • Well, the album and the preparation on its own took us over two years to complete and that was just for the audio, the booklet and the packaging. I think that if I wanted to start on multimedia as well the CD would have taken us another year at least. And you know, I wanted to see that CD released one day, so I thought to myself "let's skip that multimedia part for now" (laughs)! But we plan a DVD next year holding live material and we will also travel a bit for that as well... more details on this later on. The next thing we will work on is the mini album that we plan for release around the end of January 2005. It will be in a similar atmosphere, yes. As far as the live experience, we will change the way we present the music. So for the next tour we want an even bigger impact with more people on stage and even live drums. I will also play guitar, because I was a classically trained guitarist you know. Apart from that there will be flags and banners on stage, it will be a concept. We will first do a nightliner tour from early February 'til mid March and after that we will be on stage about every weekend.

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER



the best of two can only be an item

ONETWO



With the new album of Propaganda being cancelled and OMD on hold, a musical marriage between members of both bands was written in the stars. Well, perhaps not but fact is that under the band name OneTwo, OMD frontman Paul Humphreys and Claudia Brücken from the German act Propaganda, have now released "Item", their debut EPCD. On this release we also find "Cloud Nine", one of the tracks from the unreleased Propaganda album. A first limited pressing (2.000 copies only) of the 5-track EP has now been sold via eBay with much success. Side-Line hailed London and got both Paul Humphreys and Claudia Brücken behind the mic for an extensive interview.

You have chosen eBay and Ubersonik (the label run by several eBay employees) as platform to launch the 5-track EP. Satisfied so far of the results?

PH • Yes, on the whole we're very happy with the sales. Ebay have over 105 million members and many of them are searching for music so to have a presence in what really is one of, if not the biggest shop in the world, can only be a good thing.

CB • The tour of America in 2000 that we mentioned earlier, kicked off in Salt Lake City where we headlined a festival called Synthstock. Anyway, the promoter of the festival, Jimm Kjelgaard also worked for eBay. We became good friends since the show, and kept in touch. Jimm set up Ubersonik which is essentially a music distribution/ mail order company set up by himself and 2 other eBay workers and asked if we would be interested in being their first release and it just kind of appealed to our sense of trying out new things and as we were looking for alternative distribution anyway, we though hey why not?

Why not do it the normal way: shopping around, sign a deal and let

the rest go its way?

PH • They were really interested at firs, then a frightening thing happened. The 'Key man', the person we were dealing with got fired. This, in our industry seems to happen all the time.

CB • It happened to me during the making of my solo album actually, I was in the studio with producer Pascal Gabriel, finishing the last couple of songs, when I got a call saying that the boss of the label had quit and the rest of the staff were going with him. I knew instantly that in terms of priority, my project would go from the top to the bottom of the pile.

PH • This experience, together with Claudia's previous one, kind of scared us off the traditional way of thinking. Also, we had been playing with the idea of experimenting with an 'internet only' release so we decided to use eBay as our main outlet really to see what would happen. To be honest also, the bottom has really fallen out of our industry too, partly due to it's own incompetence but also due to an incredible amount of file sharing. The consequence of this is the fact that there isn't very much money left in the industry to sign new bands any more. If you do get signed, there isn't any guarantee against them putting in a small amount of effort and money into promoting it, and you soon find that they did the minimum amount of effort. If this happens, (and I see this all the time) your record is dead after only 2 weeks and for at lest 5 years (the standard term of licence), you have no rights to sell it yourself from your website,eBay or anywhere. This means that your last 2 years solid hard work has been for no gain at all.

OneTwo decided to fund part of the profits to the UK asthma fund. What

made you to decide so?

PH • The song 'Sister' was actually written about, and for, my sister Sue who tragically died of asthma when I was very young so it has always been my No.1 charity for donation. Asthma has been an unfortunate thread running through my family but it's also becoming a huge worldwide problem as asthma suffering is on the increase. I wrote the song as a kind of therapeutic way for me to finally deal with what happened to my sister and how it affected me long term as it was a topic I had spend decades unhealthily avoiding!

Featured on this EP is also the 'lost' Propaganda track "Cloud Nine", co-written by Martin Gore who also played guitars on it, that originally was to be used for the new Propaganda album that never saw the light in the end...

CB • "Cloud Nine" wasn't actually a lost Propaganda track as Martin and I wrote it originally for my solo album in the mid to late 90's. I then put my solo album on hold as I had been in touch with Michael and Suzanne and we hatched this idea to try Propaganda one more time. I 'loaned' "Cloud Nine" to Propaganda but then withdrew it when Propaganda ground to halt for the second time. So, its been through many different versions, it's only now though, with the OneTwo version, that I'm completely happy with it.

Is Propaganda dead for good, or did the band restart at the wrong moment and place?

CB • Well, experience tells me say "Never say never!" I certainly spent too long trying to make the latest version work which is why I broke away to do OneTwo with Paul. Having said all of this, I'm back in touch with Suzanne and Michael because on 11th November Propaganda are playing at Wembley here in London for the Princes Trust charity. The theme of the gig is 'Produced by Trevor Horn' and so a lot of artists including Seal, Art of Noise, Pet Shop Boys' etc will be coming on to sing several of their songs to celebrate 25 years of Trevor Horn. I'll be doing this with Suzanne plus Trevor's band/ orchestra so that will be a lot of fun!

Any more collaborations planned?

CB • I have always collaborated with a lot of writers and artists over the years. Outside of OneTwo, I'm also working with Erasure's Andy Bell on his solo album. I'm doing one or two duets with him and also helping out in backing vocals. It's lots of fun actually, I like Andy a lot.

To read more about this project, be sure to check www.side-line.com where we will post extra questions and answers in the next weeks!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

techno bleeps cure the past

What has a musician left to prove when he is co-responsible for selling well over 27 million albums worldwide, has done extensive touring covering all the continents, has gathered 40 platinum and gold plaques in the US, Europe and Japan, has co-written big hits including "Let's Go To Bed", "The Walk" and "The Caterpillar" and has featured in over 20 landmark award-winning music videos? Nothing. This is the story of Laurence "Lol" Tolhurst, co-founding member of The Cure. After a brief career in Presence, Tolhurst now returns with a fine electronic project under the Levinhurst moniker and a debut album "Perfect Life" that will attract the attention of more than just the Cure maniacs. Backed by his wife's exquisite vocal lines, you are served an electropop album that incorporates everything from rock, trip-hop, blues and even Middle Eastern ragas spiced with retro keyboard layers.

Your past is a bit of a double edged sword for Levinhurst you were quoted saying in almost every interview you recently did for Levinhurst. How do you handle this, I would imagine that is something very annoying to keep on explaining each time over and over again?

T • I am very proud of my past with The Cure. I think we really made a difference in modern music. The double edged sword part is that it sometimes gives people a position on what I am doing before they even hear what Levinhurst is like, contempt before investigation was never a great idea I think!

Any reason why it took you over 10 years to pick up music again? Okay, you had a son to raise, you moved from England to California, divorced and remarried, but still, that leaves plenty of time left, no?

T • I had a great deal of wreckage from my past to deal with both emotionally and spiritually which took time for me to recuperate from. I am not the kind of musician that can just churn out songs with no thought .my songs have to come from my life and experience and after I left The Cure I had to just live some life to experience things to write about.

In an interview you said: "I've been through the wringer in my life and come out the other end, and I'm glad to have made it through the tunnel." How far was that voyage towards the light? I mean, the past 10 years are reflected in this release, how would you describe them?

T • The last ten years were a wonderful and strange journey for me in which I emerged from the darkness of my imminent personal destruction to find myself as a thankful passenger on a redemptive voyage. I am still on this journey and with "Perfect Life" I wanted to illuminate that Journey as I am sure others have passed the same way and maybe it can help someone find the own way out. I always thought that was the most rewarding part of The Cure for me when people could identify with us to that extent and they would tell us that it helped them to hear our songs. Indeed a cure of sorts!

You have the advantage of bringing music with Levinhurst that is totally different to what you did with The Cure. But with the band Presence you did follow closely what The Cure had to offer, a mistake?

T • I had Presence for a couple of years. It was similar to what I had been doing before. I found it hard to win here as it was either to much like The Cure or not enough for some people! I think more than anything back then I was just on auto pilot and afraid that if I didn't do something I would just disappear from the face of the earth! I now understand what an illusion that was! So yes Levinhurst is my first serious foray into the real world again. I decided for Levinhurst that it would be only music from my heart with no direct connection with the past, although with me there, there is going to be some anyway no matter what!

The album was released by Full Contact, your own company, in March 2004, only in the US. I instantly thought it had to do with the fact that The Cure was always more successful in America than in for instance the UK?

T • Yes it has something to do with it! It's also a more pragmatic reason that we didn't have distribution elsewhere yet! We definitely foresee a EU distribution and we plan on touring there very soon too. I really want to do this our way at the moment. I have been around the big labels for years so I want a change to be master of our own destiny as it were. The good part is that we can pretty much put out what we want when we want so for instance I already have the 2nd Levinhurst cd underway and it should see a release date by next year. This does not happen on a big label! But I am still open to suggestions really!

Which reminds me, I always wondered why The Cure didn't start up their very own label. Perhaps they have become too big and too easy thinking? What's your guess?

T • Until recently it was not possible because of contracts we signed many years ago. But I am surprised that Robert didn't do it now rather than sign to Geffen. I know he would want the freedom of The Cure's own label.

Hearing that you like to control things very much inside Levinhurst, I can only think that you had a good teacher with Robert Smith.... who isn't exactly the team player either.

T • Obviously I want Levinhurst to be successful on some level so one lesson I have learned from my past is that you have to have someone steering the ship otherwise nothing ever moves forward in a band so for Levinhurst that's me!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

LEVINHURST

© Michael Frost

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

The Garden Of Delight are not going to play the UK "Carnival Of Souls" fest organised by Nightbreed as they are to split up. An email from Garden Of Delight front man Artaud Franzmann to the fest organisors goes like this: "I am sorry to say that GOD can't play at Derby. Cause of lots of trouble within the band we made the decision to take a rest for a indefinite time. Maybe thirteen years are enough. We play only the gigs in september which are already signed." We were informed that The Garden Of Delight will split up in several other new projects like Lutherion, a project by Artaud Franzmann. ✖✖✖ Things are going well at the belgian label Alfa Matrix. Their latest 2CD label compilation "Re:connected [1.0]" has now reached the number 1 spot in the german DAC charts.The compilation was released for the occasion of Alfa Matrix's 3rd birthday in a special luxury digipak 2CD (with extended booklet). Considered as a big "Thank You" to all fans who have been supporting the Belgian label, "Re:connected [1.0]" holds 28 exclusive tracks presenting the Alfa Matrix constellation of artists and what they have to offer you musically. Bands who delivered exclusive material include Front 242, Bruderschaft, Sonar, Under Viewer (242 project with a brand new track), Plastic Noise Experience, Male Or Female, Glis, Prothese (242 - Daniel B.'s solo project), Ayria, Aiboforcen (remixed by Suicide Commando), Dive, Collide, Nebula-H, Implant, Insekt, Neikka RPM, Epsilon Minus, Monolith, Dunkelwerk, Regenerator, Seize, Virtual Embrace, Hungry Lucy, Mnemonic, plus 4 special guests: à;Grumh..., Sero.Overdose, Unter Null and Agonised By Love. ✖✖✖ The 2nd album by Nebula-H will be released end of November. The new album, titled "H20", will count 10 songs and will also hold a bonus remix the band made. Nebula-H stormed the charts worldwide with their stunning debut album "H" released back in fall 2002. After festival appearances and gigs in Germany, the UK, Sweden and the Benelux the band went quiet for a while to focus on their next attack. The limited edition of "H20" will include the album and a dvd. The dvd will contain a new video clip ("Symbiosis"), 2 live impressions, an exclusive mix ("Fragments") with an animation of pictures, a 'featuring' with Pangea (side project of IC434) and a previously unreleased promo video-clip ("Renaissance Posthume"). www.alfa-matrix.com ✖✖✖ "Das Spiel Ist Aus" is the brand new single for Slovenia's finest Laibach "Das Spiel Ist Aus" is the second single to be taken from the recent album "WAT" and precedes the greatest hits album, "Laibach Anthems", due for release on 27th September alongside a DVD release, "Laibach Videos". The single, available on a 7-track CD and 4-track 12", includes two previously unreleased mixes, alongside a live version and remixes from DJ Bizzy amongst others. ✖✖✖ Axel Ermes, Hauke Harms and Volker Zacharias (aka Girls Under Glass) are back. "Zyklus", their 10th studio album, will be released on a brand new sub-label of Dependent to focus on more guitar-oriented material. "Zyklus" will be out in Spring 2005, although a single may well see a release sometime yet this year. ✖✖✖ 15 months after "True Life" and the album "Krieg gegen die Maschinen", Lights Of Euphoria now launch the 6-track "One Nation" single. This time the vocal duties have been executed by singer Jimmy Machon. Apart from the original Club Mix, produced by Vasi Vallis (NamNamBulu), Lights Of Euphoria worked with Massiv in Mensch and Syrian. On the exclusive B-side "You better run" you can hear Johan van Roy as guest vocalist. The same track also received an additional treat by Painbastard and Heimataerde. ✖✖✖ The full-length debut from the Berlin-based act Agonoize has arrived on BLC Productions. Completed with cold and evil artwork done by Mike Johnson himself (Virtual Embrace, Infekktion, Sero Overdose) the album holds 13 tracks offering aggro-EBM. Also announced is BLC productions' newest addition: Retractor. Hailing from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Retractor consists of band members Milton Sanchez and Anthony Stuart, originally from Puerto Rico. Their recipe: hard and dark electro / EBM. Their debut titled "No Resistance" is now being prepared. ✖✖✖ "Allein unter Schatten" is the title of the third full-length album by the German Dark-Wave act Mondsucht out on Scanner. Due to the long gap after their last album, rumour had already spread that Mondsucht had disappeared forever, but after spending more than 2 years in studios, a new album has finally seen the light of day. Out on the sisterlabel Alice In ... is "Vitalizer", the long overdue third album by A Spell Inside who kept silent for 2 years. Described by the label as a valid alternative to big names of the scene such as Mesh, Melotron or De/Vision.

CLIENT satisfaction guaranteed

After their self-titled album the UK duo, Sarah Blackwood and Kate Holmes already return with a second album, "City", which has been released in September on Toast Hawaii, the Mute sub-label created by Depeche Mode's Andy Fletcher. This time the brand new thirteen-track album also includes guest vocal appearances from The Libertines' Carl Barat, Pete Doherty and surprise, surprise, Depeche Mode's Martin Gore! We traced down the girls and talked things through.

The electronic drums were completely dropped from this album and you turned to sampling acoustic drums?

K • They aren't exactly acoustic drums but all kind of drums cut up and put through effects to make them sound electronic. We did this approach because we wanted to have the sound of real drums instead of these drum machines. On our last album the drums came last and now they have come first when we started programming. We have also added more strings and generally made the record sound fuller and lusher. On this second album we pushed each other a bit further. We haven't set the world on fire yet but we are moving up.

You also decided taking an outside co-producer, Joe Wilson, any particular reason?

K • We decided to work with him for this record to push us creatively and get a better sound. A co-producer is not that much busy with the artistic side but is more there to get the record done. It took quite some pressure off me and Sarah really to get everything organized and it was nice having Joe done this. Andy suggested Joe Wilson as Joe had been playing with us as on-stage mixer and we loved his vibe. He also produced sneaker Pimps and Trashmoney and understood the vibe of Client. We still did most of the work in my house though! Sarah's vocals were properly recorded and we mixed the record in the big studio at Mute.

S • It was a lot more work really compared to the first album as we didn't expect to have the record done and out this fast. Sometimes we were in the studio in London during the week and then bugger off to Barcelona to do some DJ-ing (laughs). Everything was a lot more disjointed and it felt like we worked a lot harder in such a small concentrated time frame. We have never been off the road as we had a lot of DJ commitments and we are performing a lot as well. But it was really nice and really confusing on top because sometimes the songs we played live had not been recorded in the studio yet so I had to change vocal lines here and there. Very confusing you know... I had about 4 different versions of 2 songs at one point.

You also introduced several guest vocal appearances from The Libertines' Carl Barat and Pete Doherty and Depeche Mode's Martin Gore... You are getting serious competition, Sarah!

S • Well, we wanted to keep the vocal texture interesting. Because if you have twelve songs with always the same vocals it kinda gets boring for me personally, like "Oh god do I have to listen to you again!" (Laughs) The choice was really coincidence, Pete for example just happened to be around the house. Kate liked his vocals a lot and then Carl phoned up and he told us he wanted to a do a track as well and Kate had just written a track that suited a duet really...

How did the idea take shape to have Martin Gore sing on the "Overdrive" track?

K • Andy sent him 4 tracks to have a listen at and Martin said that they were really good. Mostly he says, "oh, that's alright" and that's about the most you will get out of him really (laughs). And then he set he particularly like "Overdrive". And so we wrote him a letter, yes, a genuine letter, asking if it would be possible... It definitely worked with "Overdrive". Martin's voice is the gold-dust which turned a good song into a great track. Especially him singing "yeah yeah yeah" with his gospel-like voice at the end of the song was the final touch. For me it was the approval for the project.

S • After I heard the final mix it was like shivers up the spine and goose bumps on the arse! You know, he didn't have to do it as he turned down things for the past 20 years. If it hadn't been Martin we would have asked Joe to do it.

What has been Andy's involvement in this release? I remember he told me that he was quite involved when making the first album, is it still so?

K • Andy is the executive producer on this record. He was closely involved with the entire process of the record - after I had written most of the album over Christmas. We played them to Daniel Miller and it was like "Great songs - the record is scheduled for release in September 6th - go and make it!" (Laughs)

What keeps you girls running?

K • If you are a musician you cannot be in it for the money. One out of a thousand hits the jackpot so basically you have to be in it for the laugh. I spent 20 years doing music and I could have done something else and be on the top of my career now. I was trained as a film editor you know and I could probably earn a lot more. We don't earn anything in Client. Touring breaks even so we can tour.

S • I'm an interior designer (laughs)!

K • We also had a US label paying us 50.000 dollar for just one track "Leipzig" that was featured on Crime Series International. So that keeps us going for a bit. Apart from that we do our club, sell T-shirts and so on. In fact we can keep on doing this for a long time until we are 60 or 70 (laughs)!

Any more collaborations you foresee for the near future?

K • Yeah, we did a song with Moonbootica, a German dance house act, who already did a mix of "Here and Now" for us. But we'd love doing some remix stuff for a dark Gothic act like Marilyn Manson...

S • We did a remix for Erasure's "Oh l'amour" though... but we frightened them (laughs)! They didn't really like it all and said it was crap. I thought it was brilliant though! They obviously wanted a four on the floor mix I guess so that's why we didn't get along, bless them (laughs)!

To read more about this project, be sure to check www.side-line.com where we will post extra questions and answers in the next weeks!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

MISS KITTEN
grab that pussy!

Electroclash vocalist Miss Kitten has finally delivered her debut album, simply entitled "I com", for those that don't get the explicit sexual reference, add an 'e' at the end of 'com' and switch a few buttons in your brain. Miss Kitten, real name Caroline Hervé, who worked with The Hacker, Felix da Housecat and Chicks on Speed in the past delivers exactly what you expect though less easy to devour than one would expect. A difficult chick? We checked it and can only conclude she is not all that bad as it seems...

Listening to "I com", I get the impression to discover another side of Miss Kittin, I mean all kind of stuff and styles you never experienced before (as DJ and as singer/musician)! How come?

MK • Because nobody knows me, and I am definitely more opened and curious than people think, especially after all that they read in the press the last few years. I don't care about that at all, I am free, so I can do whatever I want. The woman behind Miss Kittin? Ah ah ah, here we go, we enter the system where image is more important than the music... Miss Kittin is just my professional name, but I am the same person. I am not a marketing product who has to ask permission to cut my hair, neither to decide what projects or music I want to do. Maybe you think it's more me because my voice is not on someone else's music. I was always myself, and that's why I am here today.

How did you come to ask Tobias Neumann and Thies Mynther to write and produce most of the tracks?

MK • I knew Tobi since Munich, when he started to produce the Chicks. When he moved to Berlin, I came several times in his studio to record stuff and I was impressed by it and his professionalism. Then he introduced me to Thies while they were recording the Chicks 99 cents album, as I wrote a song for the girls. Then we did a remix of Smash TV, that was never released. We had such a great time we decided to make my album together and we kept this remix for us, it's the song "Dub about me". I came with the whole general idea of a various album: lyrics, styles of music I wanted to develop around it. Then like a puzzle, we built each track together. There was always one to bring the right vibes at the right moment, perfect balance. Some days, we didn't feel like working, so we didn't work, we went for good dinner, or we just chat. No stress. Actually we talked a lot, about everything, the tracks, our life.

Each song stands for another idea/influence! What does it say about the music you're listening to and the music you like to write?

MK • Exactly. Each song was a challenge, asking myself "can I do a song like this, or like that?". In general, the main concern was: can it fit harmoniously on one album without sounding too chaotic. But we knew if we would make it, it would stands out. I said to the producers, if we take the problem song per song, if we like each song, then it should work, more than taking the problem in a global way. We just stayed very focus. At the end, you can see the album is built like a DJ set somehow, with powerful moments and quiet ones. They tell a lot about my taste of course, as a DJ or a music lover, like the Chicago influence on "Requiem for a hit" to the typical electronic ballad of "Happy Violentine". I've never done such tracks before, I was totally free to do it in a solo album. Even if my main project stays with The Hacker, I don't think he would have had fun exploring all these sides with me. I invited him on a track though, "Soundtrack of now", which is our tribute to Detroit deep techno music. The track could well have been on one of our joined releases. He stays my main partner, so that's logical... When he came to the studio, it was actually the 1st time I saw him working not on his machines. It was unbelievable, him, who normally works in a low tech way, took control of this big professional studio with Tobi like he'd have done that all his life. He knew exactly what he wanted, and in 2h, the track was done... For now, we're both busy, we live far away from each other but we've never been as closed at today. To be torn apart always brought us more together as we realize how much we miss each other. But, we're so lazy, we like to work fast, and we need a lot of distance to be able to find this right moment. So we'll surely work again together but we don't know when.

I read in an interview that "Happy violentine" is probably the song that represents you the best on "I com"! Can you explain considering that this is a slow, kind of lounge piece?

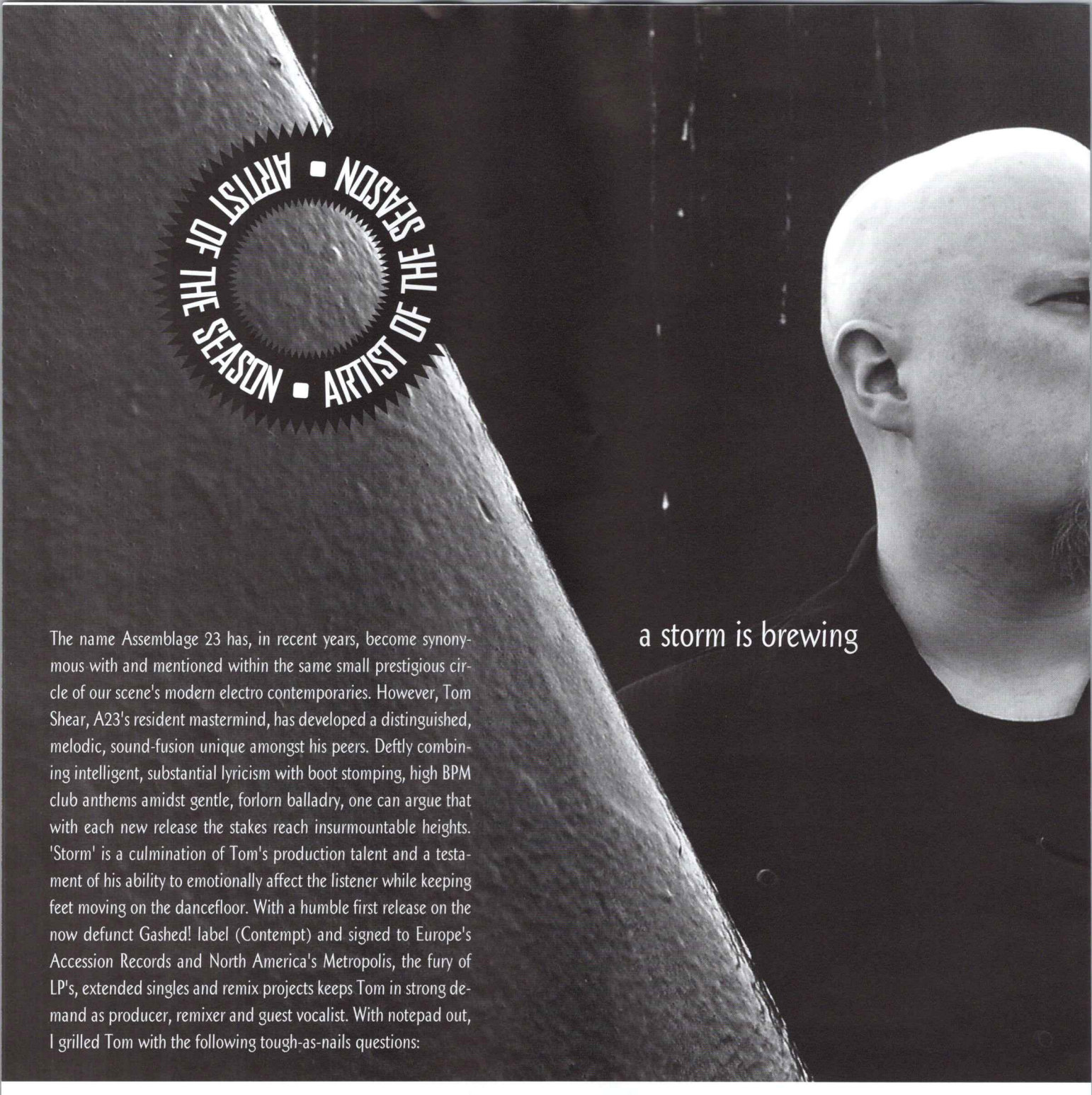
MK • True, this track explains well why I wanted to do this album. I always wondered if I was able to write a strong electronic ballad like Massive Attack could do, or the early Warp stuff too. I am very proud of it, especially as it was the hardest to sing. My voice had to be very controlled in deepness, keep the tone in all its fragility. Also Tobi did an amazing work on it. He asked me to spend a whole night alone on it and late in the morning, we met in a club, he was so excited to play what he did. The next day, I listened to it, and I discovered this amazing Asian atmosphere he developed, I was amazed. It shows as well that everybody in the team had his freedom. Sometimes, my producers needed to be alone with the tracks without me around.

The cover version of Indochine's "3eme Sexe" surprised me!

MK • I did it by laziness, because I can't write songs in my own language, French. So Wolfgang Tillmans, my friend who did the pics on I com, to who I offered the Indochine album, gave me the idea. I immediately chose "3eme Sexe" for the lyrics, totally weird, that can be sang by a boy or a girl. It was then easy to make a cover in the extreme opposite way. I see it as a karaoke version in a science-fiction bar.

To read more about this project, be sure to check www.side-line.com where we will post extra questions and answers in the next weeks!

BY STEPHANE FROIDCOEUR
AND BERNARD VAN ISACKER



a storm is brewing

The name Assemblage 23 has, in recent years, become synonymous with and mentioned within the same small prestigious circle of our scene's modern electro contemporaries. However, Tom Shear, A23's resident mastermind, has developed a distinguished, melodic, sound-fusion unique amongst his peers. Deftly combining intelligent, substantial lyricism with boot stomping, high BPM club anthems amidst gentle, forlorn balladry, one can argue that with each new release the stakes reach insurmountable heights. 'Storm' is a culmination of Tom's production talent and a testament of his ability to emotionally affect the listener while keeping feet moving on the dancefloor. With a humble first release on the now defunct Gashed! label (Contempt) and signed to Europe's Accession Records and North America's Metropolis, the fury of LP's, extended singles and remix projects keeps Tom in strong demand as producer, remixer and guest vocalist. With notepad out, I grilled Tom with the following tough-as-nails questions:

The new record, "Storm," follows the similar A23 pattern with a potent mixture of high-energy dance anthems, powerful lyrics and sparse balladry. What differences can fans expect with this record and what comparisons can you personally make with past work, production wise?

A • I feel like I learn more every time I do an album, so it's always my goal to apply what I've learned to sort of refine and improve the sound of A23. With this record, I learned a lot about arrangement and how paying attention to what synth parts you have going on in different frequency ranges can really clean things up and make it possible to pull off more complex arrangements without it sounding like a mess. So this is a much more layered album than anything I've done in the past. I think the average track around the "Failure" era had about 20 or so tracks when I recorded it... "Storm" is about twice that.

Why is the last song always the "experimental" one such as "30kft", "Lullaby" etc.?

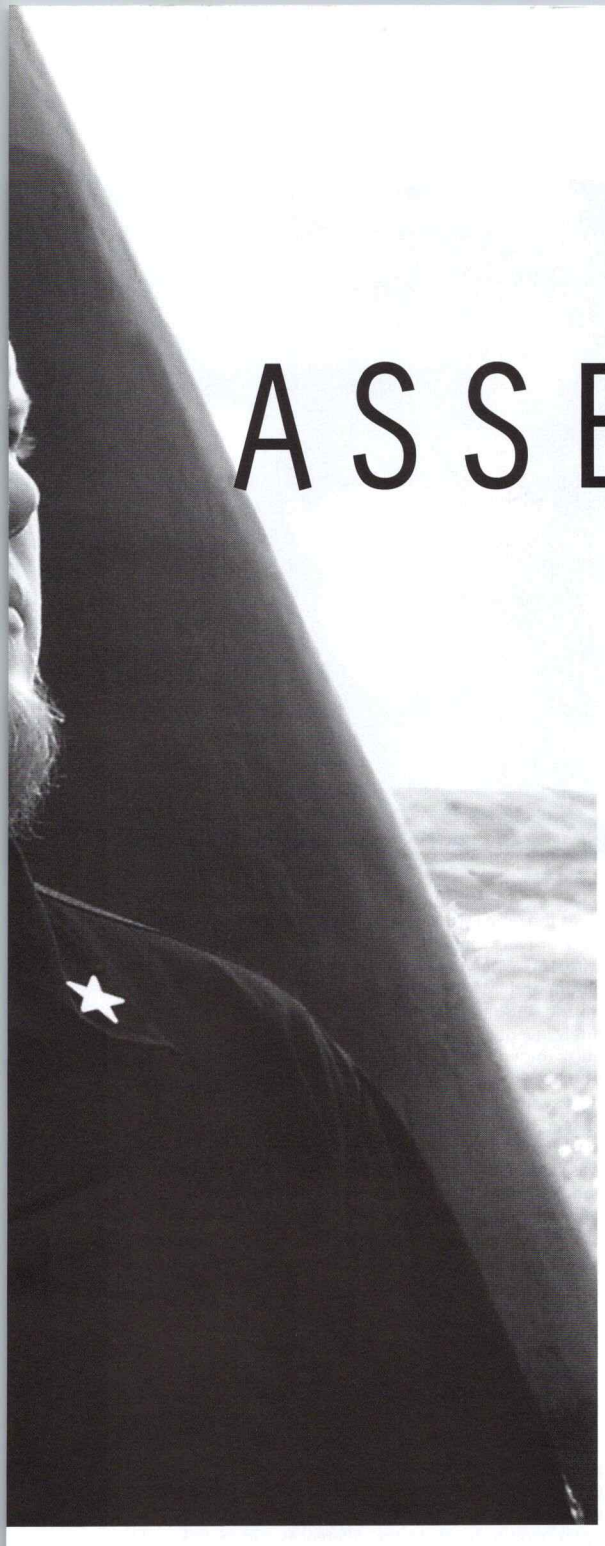
A • Figuring out the track order is a bit of a science unto itself. And one that I am not positive I have totally come to grips with yet. There is usually at least one track per album that seems like a natural 'opener' to me. Usually something with an intro that sort of eases you into the album versus just starting right away. I save the 'weird' track for last mainly because I think it disrupts the flow of an album when bands put something very weird or uncharacteristic right in the middle. It gives me a chance to do something a little different, but if the listener doesn't care for it, they don't have to skip it to keep enjoying the record, basically. Ironically, though, the last track has often turned out to be one of the more popular tracks on the past albums, so go figure.

Speaking of 30kft, um, uh, what the hell is that all about? Trying to evoke a mass-suicide?

A • It's a bit of a tear-jerker, I suppose. Basically it was inspired by a documentary I saw about plane crashes. They were talking about how the advent of cell phone technology had changed the way they were able to piece together why crashes happened because many times, people would try to call their loved ones to say goodbye before the point of impact. As part of this, they played some answering machine messages that people onboard the planes that crashed on 9/11 had left their loved ones and it was one of the most tragic things I had ever heard. It really left an impression on me, and since I fly a lot myself, obviously that's the kind of thing you're sort of forced to think about yourself. So the song all came out of that, basically.

Being a lot on tour, what is your most/least favorite part of touring?

A • My favorite part is undoubtedly getting to see so many parts of the world and meet so many interesting people and having someone else pay for it! For that alone, it's the greatest job in the world. On the flip side, it is totally exhausting... you don't sleep much, you don't eat right, you invariably get sick... and of course it's hard to be away from families/wives/girlfriends/etc. As far as favorite places... I do love London... Barcelona is beautiful and an incredible party city... Sweden and Norway are also really beautiful countries.



ASSEMBLAGE 23

Do you think the music industry will fully recover from illegal downloading?

A • It's hard to say whether the music industry will ever be what it once was. We've kind of opened a bit of a Pandora's Box with this one, and there's nothing anyone can really do to put the lid back on. My guess is that things are going to get worse before they get better. I wouldn't be surprised if we lose some labels in this scene in the coming years. This scene is so small, that we're not as insulated against lost sales as are the major labels, but most people don't think about that. They think the labels in this scene are selling hundreds of thousands of albums, when the reality is, many are only selling 1,000-3,000 at best.

What 'Storm' related activities can fans expect in late '04/'05 in the A23 camp?

A • In the October/November timeframe we will be touring Europe with Run Level Zero and Rotersand, which we look forward to very much. On November 8th, the second maxi single for the album will be release in the US and in Europe. Then, we'll be doing a full US tour with a band I produced called Backandtotheleft who I think people are really going to like. They have really strong, catchy songs, great vocals, and really well written lyrics. So that tour will be around March or April of 2005.

Finally, rumour has it you're the guest vocalist for the next Bruderschaft release. Idle chatter or sane validity?

A • I'm beginning to wonder myself. I was asked to do it, and we were supposed to record the vocals last fall, but I've heard nothing about it since then, and never even heard music for it. So who knows?

BY DAN KOVEN

CLAN OF XYMOX

tribal senses united

With 20 years under their wings, the Holland based dark wave act Clan Of Xymox ends this year with a well-deserved best of taking a selection of 14 of their best tracks. Debuting on the English cult independent label 4AD, home at those times to the Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance, Pixies, Throwing Muses, among others, they quickly gathered a huge following worldwide that still to this day remains the strength of the band. Side-Line talked with Ronny Moorings, man behind what can be considered one of the most successful acts in this scene.

For most fans, the 4AD era is somewhat sanctified, so why did you chose to re-record those 5 tracks?

R • Ha, my own past is pretty sacred to me too! There was absolutely nothing wrong with any of these tracks but since it was recorded such a long time ago it was more like a personal challenge to see if I could better it somehow. On the contrary to what most bands would do, I made sure I left all the atmosphere, style, beat, keys etc. intact, matter of fact is that I took great care in finding all the samples, old keyboards, my effect pedals for the guitar etc. in order to be as exact as possible if not even spot on. Most of those instruments I have in my computer nowadays or as expanders, but some unique samples were stored on old floppy disks, so I had to think hard where I left them and how sounds were created. Certain sounds I had to re-create because the disks were corrupted. The only thing what I found the most important to improve was the vocals. The instrumentation is exactly the same, I only left out here and there some messy bits which irritated me on the old albums. To me the vocals were a serious point for me, I think I sing them over the years way better then when I started with the band, so in short we all win with these new recordings!

In the press note you were quoted saying "Here so far the story ends with the best of Clan of Xymox tracks." Usually best of CDs are to keep the fans busy... The same thing for you?

R • I can hardly say it is a filler of some kind to keep the fans busy because the "Farewell" album is still pretty fresh. It just seemed the right moment in time to release the "Best Of" because of the 20-year celebration date. I think its a great offering for all our fans and also a great sampler for people who maybe want to know our music without having to buy each album to get an idea. Of course I hope they will get encouraged by this album to get further into our releases, so this might also be a good incentive. Anyway, who knows about further plans, I certainly do not think further then a few months the most... I want to go back to writing new songs, I already wrote 2 songs and they feel really good to me, so I can't wait to write some more. I also work on 2 things right now in a moderate pace; a DVD of Clan Of Xymox which will contain 10 videos or so with some extra stuff on it and a new album. Further we will tour and I make place in my schedule to do DJ appearances.

I happen to know John Fryer through his work with his new label Something To Listen To, how was it working with him back in the early days as your producer?

R • The last time I met him he was still a producer and an expensive one too (laughs). No I did not know he had a label, but I am not surprised as he can spot things very easily. Meeting John Fryer and working with him was really an eye opener for me.

At the time I worked with him he was the in house engineer of Blackwing studios and worked on a regular basis with 4AD. When I worked with him on mixing the self titled album and "Medusa", I learned a lot about his methods of mixing and finding interesting approaches. He was absolutely inventive with finding the right treatment for sounds and sampling them. On "Medusa" we were just kicking carbon boxes to find a suitable kick drum sound, basically hitting everything in the studio to find replacement sounds instead of the usual rhythm box standard sounds. Also he was a master with the ARL I believe it's called. Anyway, he was one of the first ones, giving many 4AD artists his personal trademark on instruments like a piano. I always think back with fond memories of mixing these albums, trying hours to get the mix right but also the coordination of all the hands on the desk, since there was no automated mixing desk (let alone computers) to assist in mixing and muting at the right time. Of course his qualities as a producer/engineer went quickly legendary, especially when NIN started working with John and this album became huge. ...

What was wrong with the Xymox tracks that they were not included?

R • To me Xymox was too vague of a direction, into the more pop side of things, so as you already spotted, it is a Best of Clan Of Xymox release and indeed not a Xymox release, so no tracks will be included from the Xymox period. In a way this album is again good to highlight the differences and to make a final statement between the two periods.

To end, what emotions did make an everlasting impression?

R • I will never forget the sentiment I felt when we got our first signing with a prestigious label (4AD) which did not sign any bands for two years since DCD 'til we came around, which was the most flattering thing ever to experience. Even being signed away from them by a Major label was an experience, I would not want to have missed that either. Ok, if it was all good for the band in retrospect is debatable, but it was a good learning school, essential for the future development of COX. The new starting point for Clan Of Xymox in 1997 was one of those sentiments again, feeling reborn as it were, all was in place, the band on the right track again with the right labels Pandaimonium Records and Metropolis Records. I do not really have bad memories concerning the band, all what happened with the band and people was necessary in order to get musically where we are now.

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

Three years after "Smell of Rain", the Norwegian legend Mortiis returns with a full band for the release of "The Grudge" on which Mortiis fights the reminder of his old demons, hence the title. The album was preceded on August 16th by the release of Mortiis's first ever single in the UK which immediately hit the mainstream charts, mainly because of the trick that Erasure also did the last time: making the single only available for a limited period. Three years is a long time coming, but for Mortiis it was a logical wait. We caught up with Mortiis for a chat on electronics, manual reading nerds in bed and grudges against people. But first why did it take him 3 years...

fighting old demons
MORTIIS

M • (Grins) Everybody is asking me this! Basically the time in between the two releases is divided in three things. After "Smell of Rain" I felt like I needed to create a band because I wanted to play live. So basically the first year was spent forming and rehearsing with the band. The second year was spent rehearsing even more and touring. Then the third year was spent creating new material and going into the studio to record and produce "the Grudge" and that really took us a whole year. I must say that I have also learned a lot on the computer as far as programming, beats and doing a lot of electronic stuff, which I didn't know a lot of when I was doing "Smell of Rain" really. It was like learning how to ride a bike and doing it well. But all these happened in the background and people didn't see that of course. In between we also shot a video for "Mental Maelstrom" in 2002, so stuff did happen. But it will never take us that long again, I can promise you that!

When it comes to programming you are an autodidact, right?

M • Yeah 95% of it was self-taught and 5% was what other people taught me. But the thing is that the town where I live has nobody else doing this, so there is nobody I can call up to say "hey, I'm messing around with this or that software, care to help me out this afternoon?" So it was all about listening to other people's album to find out how they did this or that, I did a lot of analyzing, eating manuals, basically just being a nerd (laughs). I agree that this is of course wasting precious time, but on the other hand I want to do thing all by myself and know how it works. It's rewarding when you do it by yourself, call it an ego boost... If it takes time, it takes time. Initially I first looked at programming from scratch, then I started looking at slicing beats and loops, then I also checked out some cool break beats that bands like Prodigy use, combining drum sounds, adding the effects, distort etc. You know, distortion is the best thing ever! I loved the filters from Waldorf, or the Kurzweil samplers, I have to check out Sherman Filter bank as well. But that one is hardware and I prefer the software to hardware as it takes less space and is much easier to handle. Okay, I do have some hardware synths and a Waldorf synth which is almost like a microwave type, but it has an excellent sound.

On "Smell of Rain" you also did the programming, in fact you did everything yourself, a bit too static perhaps but was it that bad?

M • Well, I wanted to make "The Grudge" sound more human, less static, less sterile and work really into the details. Everything was also too clean, the straight up and down, you know... like they used to do in the eighties. I didn't really understand the critics back at the time when they said it sounded too much 'off the street'... but now it does make sense. That album is what it is. Now I experimented with everything I could find, bought a few new hardware synths and so on.

It must have been frustrating sometimes...?

M • Yeah! There is a lot of software that has great DSP effects, but when you run things through it you sometimes get results that should not even be allowed to exist (laughs)! On "Broken skin" I used lots of effects on the strange background sounds. You know, something I usually do is reading manuals in bed, it's a principle... It's even smart reading manuals, you'd be amazed what you can learn from it!

When you call an album "The Grudge", I think that many people will feel like this has a very personal message on top, knowing that you have always identified yourself very much with the content of your releases...

M • Yes, that's true and it is a very personal album. Back in the "Smell of Rain" days I wasn't really a happy person. I had been through a lot of depressive stuff that had lasted until the late nineties and it was kind of wearing of at that time and I felt like shit. When I finally got rid of that crap, anger started kicking in towards the individuals that made me feel so bad. For me it is important to write about the way I feel. If it's too personal, than fuck it because that is what I am going to do. I trusted some people by mistake because they really fucked me around. It is a very genuine approach as I can still sing this material years after it was written.

The studio set-up consisted of the live members, you had everything under control, something you have always been keen on, right?

M • Yeah, basically I am the boss, the great dictator, the Mussolini of the band! But basically without a leader you soon end up with anarchy anyhow. But having said, that, I'm very open to suggestions and experimentations. We often experimented to create sounds, ugly distortions and effects like on "Twist the Knife" or "The Worst in me" where a lot of it was down to us sitting there and experimenting. I think that my ego now is not easy to reconcile with jamming sessions I must admit... Future will tell. I do trust the guys though, but it is something that I have to convince myself of. But it didn't cause any friction, everybody knows his place... that sounds a bit too much like a nazi, no? (Laughs) Believe me man, everybody is happy in the band!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

GLIS dancing on borrowed grounds

Tagged as the next Assemblage 23 from the Seattle Arena, Shaun Frandsen aka Glis chose to avoid that trap for his new album "Nemesis", to be released through the European label Alfa Matrix. On "Nemesis" Frandsen exploits the darker sounds and even introduces large portions of noise and distortion resulting in comparisons with the best work of Suicide Commando and related. For sure a band that has a wide spectrum of interests and qualities that is reflected in the growing interest for the band in Germany where Glis' latest single "No Pulse", taken from his new album, is getting regular airplay. Among the most avid fans of his production work we find Front 242's Daniel B. and Mark Jackson of VNV Nation, the latter even introduces Glis material in his DJ-sets. Our Side-Line correspondent relates...

What sets Glis apart from all the other bands in the scene?

G • It's not my direct motive to stand alone amongst the artists in our scene, in fact Glis derives a lot of influence from many of the bands and projects in the industrial genres. I suppose what might set me apart from the crowd is that I try to do something different for every release. With 'Nemesis' Glis will take on a rougher, harder edge sound to counterbalance the cleaned up pop sounds of the previous album. I listened to a lot of Nitzer Ebb and Front 242 when I was younger and you can obviously hear that in the whole composition. As far as influences go on a grand scale, I have always listened to, and appreciated music from all categories. Being a musician, I find myself listening to some of the most ridiculous music just based on the value of its production (e.g.: country and r&b).

Tell us about Glis' own unique style of music? "Nemesis" reflects a drastic change of sound?

G • You really think I have a unique sound? If I was to look objectively, I would say that Glis is a mesh of several genres in our scene. Perhaps that is where you discover the unique flavor? With 'Nemesis' you get a harsher sound when compared to 'Balance'. Like I said, I always try to do something different with the Glis sound as to not fall into a routine of putting out the same record over and over.

How do you go about writing songs?

G • I usually start with writing a few instrumental loops with drums and a few sequences. When I am happy with the sound, I put together the demo instrumental. Then I think of lyrics and record vocals. Once those are all cleaned up and effected properly, I compose the rest of the track.

On your new album, what were the challenges of writing and recording it?

G • First challenge would be not to repeat the sound of 'Balance'. The second was to find a comfort zone in the newer style without directly ripping off another bands sound. I listened to a lot of old EBM. I wanted to bring back that older sound style.

What is your latest news with the band?

G • The only thing I am working on right now is the final production for 'Nemesis', I have been working on 'Nemesis' material since September of 2003 you know. And later I will be playing some shows in North America (possibly Mexico City and next year Tokyo).

How are people currently reacting to your music?

G • I've received a lot of good feedback from the newer stuff. Already DJ's are spinning the single 'No Pulse' in Europe. One DJ in particular, Mark Jackson of VNV Nation has taken a big interest in the track 'Disappear!'. If you get to hear him spin you are sure to hear the new Glis.

What is your best experience as a band?

G • Playing in Europe. And my worst was almost getting killed in a snowstorm while on tour last year. Our car spun out on ice and we came close to being nailed by a truck. We laugh about it today though.

What is a Glis live show like?

G • A Glis live show has always been straight from the heart and very energetic. If I don't walk offstage with rubbery muscles and sweat running from every pour, I didn't do my job. This goes for whoever is on stage playing with me too. We have fun, and we try to get everyone all to dance by showing our own enthusiasm on the stage. If I can walk away and say I gave it my all (comparable to a sporting event) then I know the show was a success, be it for an audience of 50 people or 1000. Recently, I've found it even more enjoyable to play live with the new material from 'Nemesis'. The tracks are more stompy and angry and it allows me to open myself up more emotionally to the audience.

How was it to work with artists such as Jennifer Parkin (Ayria), TomShear (A23), and Karloz.M (Manufactura)? Does the new album involve any other artist?

G • Working with Jennifer was fun. We agreed on many things for her project Ayria, so it was very easy to write the songs I did for her. Tom Shear is a great mentor. He lives downstairs from me. Hearing his music pounding through the floor is inspiration enough for me. Karloz.M is a good friend of mine and we started making music around the same time. We have both been involved somewhat in each other's projects. He is an amazing musician. 'Nemesis' will feature guest vocals by the local Seattle band Tau Factor, who is also a very close friend of mine and a talented artist.

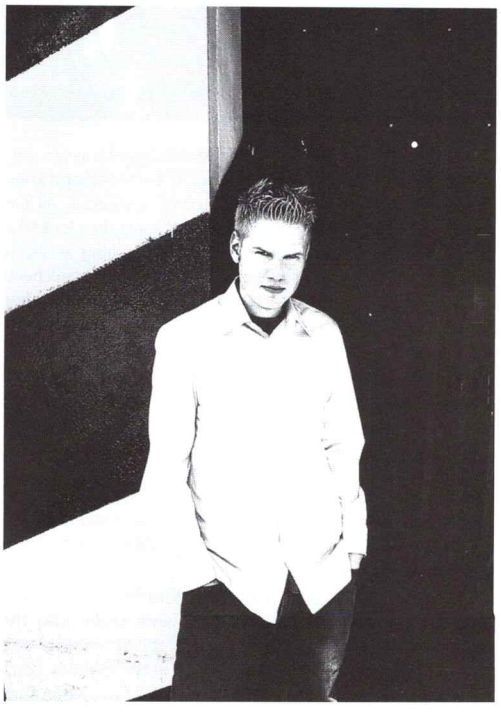
What do you think of the current EBM/ Industrial/ noise/electro scene today? Any bands you particularly follow?

G • I'm glad that more bands are sounding more industrial again. I help out occasionally at an all industrial music store in Seattle called Musicwerks (www.musicwerks.org). I get to listen to just about everything that comes out. For me, the best bands with albums out this year are: Mind.In.A.Box, :W:, Assemblage 23, De/Vision, Fixmer/Mccarthy, Pow[d]er Pussy, and Manufactura. I would love to someday have guest vocals done by Douglas McCarthy.

What are your plans for the future?

G • I'm going to ask my girlfriend to marry me so we can live happily ever after in a house far away with air conditioning (laugh)...

BY JOHN SEPULVEDA



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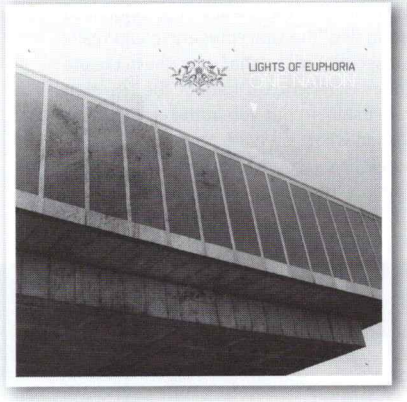

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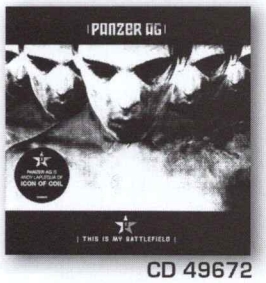

CD 49672

BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL

Eighteen years and Black Tape for a Blue Girl is still making beautiful music. Now they are back with "Halo Star", their 9th album to date. Through twelve songs the band takes you on a trip designed by songwriter/lyricist Sam Rosenthal. But first we took the opportunity to talk with label owner and band frontman Sam Rosenthal on the scene's drastic changes in recent years. Did it have an impact on the band as well as on Projekt Record's?

S • I personally don't buy into that whole angle as to why sales are down. Sales are down in this genre because of the crappy economy and the fact that there are less fans of this kind of music at the moment. I think the fan base ebbs and flows, and the tide is still out. But goth/ethereal/darkwave fans have been hurt by job losses and the general deficit that our lives are haunted by. I think that's what's hurting sales. I think that blaming copying and file sharing is an excuse that the major labels give, to explain what's going on. I think that file sharing is a great way for people to discover new music...

It's been a pretty long time since you last hit the road live. What can we expect on stage for this upcoming tour? Will you have all live members from the current album, "Halo Star" performing with you?

S • The last tour was back in 1999, so it has been a long time. When The Scavenger Bride came out in 2002, Lisa was pregnant.... so there was no way we could get on the road with a baby about to be born. And then raising him has been her focus these last two years, so we made a decision that she would take a sabatical from the live band. Can you imagine a baby riding in a van for 8 hours, then hanging out for soundcheck!? So, of the 6 people in the live band, only Bret, Elysabeth and I play on "Halo Star". For the tour, Bret Helm plays acoustic guitar and sings, Elysabeth Grant plays viola and sings, Bart Helm plays guitars, Nicki Jaine plays guitar and piano, J. De Wolfe plays percussion and I play electronics. It's pretty amazing for me to hear a full band interpreting my songs. It brings them to a new level emotionally and physically.... we sound like a band! (laughs). It reflects the sound of the album, and then goes even further. "Scarecrow" really rocks, and "Halo Star" is really sparse and sensitive. I'm really enjoying what we sound like....

Sam, you and Lisa have a young son together. How does his presence affect your musical activities? Have you written any songs that directly reflect this lifestyle change?

S • Sasha is two years and two months old, now. He's such a little sweetie. Lisa has been doing an amazing job being his mommy, and raising him, he's so bright and kind and loving (we were at central park a few days before leaving on tour, and he ran over and started kissing a little doggy!).... I don't think I have written songs about the lifestyle change, because my songs aren't really directly about my life in that way (IE: the house, the business, the cat). However there is a song on the album, "You're love is sweeter than wine," which was influenced by Sasha's personality. Even though it's written from the perspective of a woman telling a man to trust his intuition, and to go with the positive feelings he has, it comes out of seeing the joy and happiness in Sasha's heart, and wishing to live life that way. "My love, my love, life can be so hard, if you force it. Believe in me 'cause I believe in you. I believe in the beauty in your eyes. in the power of your words. I believe in your purity. You set me free...."

What other musical projekts are the members of Black Tape involved in?

S • We're all busy! Bret, Bart and Jason are in the band Audra, Elysabeth has the band Rachel's Surrender and also the Greenscare, and Nicki Jaine does her own solo music....

After your tour in the States, are there any plans for Europe?

S • We're talking with a larger band about possibly coming over in December, but time is getting short, so it's probably not going to happen 'til early 2005. We are talking with people in Germany, Italy and Greece about shows. I would definitely love to come to play, because I love Europe and would love to playing our music for the fans over there....

I understand from your website, that there is a 20 page booklet available to accompany Halo Star...

S • I did all the photography and graphic design of the booklet. I wanted the band to figure prominently in the booklet, but they are in front of surrealist/hallucinatory photo layers that reflect the world of the songs. With the figure on the cove, Lisa is playing the part of "Halo" (he's male, but I wanted him to have an androgynous look). Elsewhere the girl(s?) who populates his life / songs appears in his mind in a tormented situation in an abandoned building. She's being torn apart... though it could be by her own choice or just by the power of his personality. The booklet is very colorful, because I wanted to reflect the diversity of the instruments and styles on the album....

Sam, when writing each song and its lyrics, how and when do you determine if it will be a male or a female vocal?

S • Generally with this album, I wanted to write male songs.... because it is something I haven't done so much on the past few albums. I wanted to write songs where Bret could really get immersed in the words and melody, and drive them along. So, in that sense, I knew that most of the songs would be male before I started and that influenced the choice. But a song like "the Gravediggers" could really go either way. The insecurity of the character doesn't relate to sexuality of gender experience. It's about the fear that the Gravediggers are itchin' to put you in the earth before you have accomplished what you have set out to do. "The Gravediggers lick their lips, and push their shovels against the Earth. In anticipation, they discretely look my way...."

BY PATRICE SYNTHEA

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

"Black Heritage" is the the special, conceptual and limited mini-album release of The Eternal Afflict out on Scanner Records. According to the band, the album which has been entirely dedicated to the colour black is different than anything before, released by Eternal Afflict: "Already in 1993, we were planning a mini-album with cover-versions of some of our all-time favourites, but only now, 11 years after we finally succeeded to make our long kept dream come true." Besides two brand new own tracks ("Schwarz" and "Black Heritage"), this 7-tracks mcd contains coverversions of "Paint it Black" (Rolling Stones), "Lady in Black" (Uriah Heep), "Black Hole Sune" (Soundgarden), "Black Planet" (The Sisters of Mercy) and "Black Night" (Deep Purple). ✖✖✖ "UploadedAndRemixed" is the title of the brand new release by Scandiavia's finest Icon Of Coil This album holds remixes by (among others) Apoptygma Berzerk, Implant, Funker Vogt, Combichrist, Moonitor, FGFC820 (Rexx Arcana and Dracos) and more. The album also contains completely new versions of the clubhits "Shallow Nation" and "Floorkiller". The release also holds two new exclusive tracks "Been There" and "TB Memory". ✖✖✖ The Polish duo Agonised By Love has joined the roster of the Belgian label Alfa Matrix. You can expect their debut album this Winter. Musically their work can best be described as orchestral romantic dark electronics that remind of bands such as Diary Of Dreams, Diorama, Clan Of Xymox, etc. while combining influences of darkwave, new romantic as well as classical music that connects them with bands of the 4AD and Projekt labels. The band consists of the duo Rafal Tomaszczuk and Mariusz Gryciuk. After a first promo CD "Blindness" released in 2002, the band soon started working on a new full album called "All of white horizons". ✖✖✖ One year after the return of Hanzel Und Gretyl and just in time for their North American Tour with legendary Ministry, the duo is back with "Scheissmessiah". As with their previous album, which was banned in Germany, it's easy to predict, that the same thing will happen also with their new opus, once again dealing with a lot of German Nazi clichés, but in the usual, very 'innocent', 'funny' and typically 'American' way. Through 11 tracks you can once again discover what this cult band is all about, like it or hate it. The cover-artwork dwells between Rembrandt, Richard Wagner and Nazi-Kitsch. Or what did you expect? ✖✖✖ The Belgian EBM act Ionic Vision is working on brand new material, this time completely recorded using 'Reason' software. Sven: "New equipment, new sounds, new way of working... It always slows a band down, but so far we can reveal that we have enough tracks in a demo-stage for a complete album, which we hope to finish later on this year." We already learned that the former lead-singer of Dupont will be doing guest-vocals on the new material. Soundwise the material will be easier sounding and less raw than on "NeuMaschinen". Several DJ's will be making club-versions (12" vinyl only) for you to enjoy. ✖✖✖ "Pleasure For Nothing" is the title of the solo project from DeCoy (the female vocalist from the Polish electro act Fading Colours) recorded at the Zlota Skala studios near Warsaw. The material holds a collection of atmospheric danceable songs in the vein of the Bristol sound (Portishead, Massive Attack etc). The 10-track album, which was originally planned to be released in autumn 2003, will be out on September 20th on Big Blue records. Last year DeCoy, together with the team of MTV Poland, went to Berlin to shoot a promo videoclip for her solo album. ✖✖✖ Marilyn Manson has revealed the details of his upcoming 17-track best of album which will also be released as a DVD. The album titled "Lest We Forget" includes a new single, Manson's version of Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus". The track listing for the collection is as follows: The Love Song, Personal Jesus, mOBSCENE, The Fight Song, Tainted Love, The Dope Show, This Is The New Shit, Disposable Teens, Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This), Lunchbox, Tourniquet, Rock Is Dead, Get Your Gunn, The Nobodies, Long Hard Road Out Of Hell, The Beautiful People and The Reflecting God. The deluxe edition will include a bonus DVD with videos for (s)AINT, mOBSCENE, This Is The New S**t, Disposable Teens, The Fight Song, The Nobodies, Autopsy, The Dope Show, Don't Like The Drugs, Rock Is Dead, Coma White, Long Hard Road Out Of Hell, The Beautiful People, Tourniquet, Man That You Fear, Cyrptorchid, Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This), Dopehat, Lunchbox, and Get Your Gunn. The album will be released on September 27th. In related news Manson will lend his voice to an alien called Edgar who acts as narrator in the computer game Area-51. Also lending his voice to the game is David 'Mulder' Duchovny from X Files fame.

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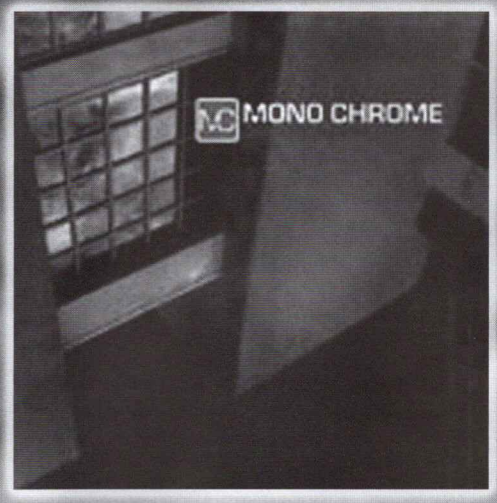

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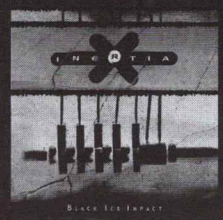

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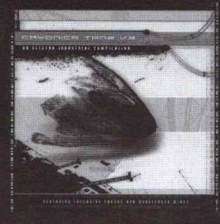

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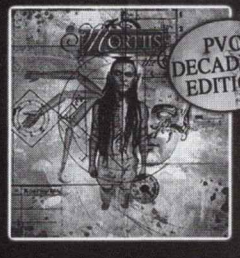

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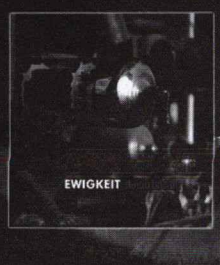

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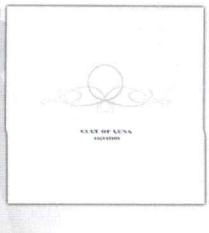
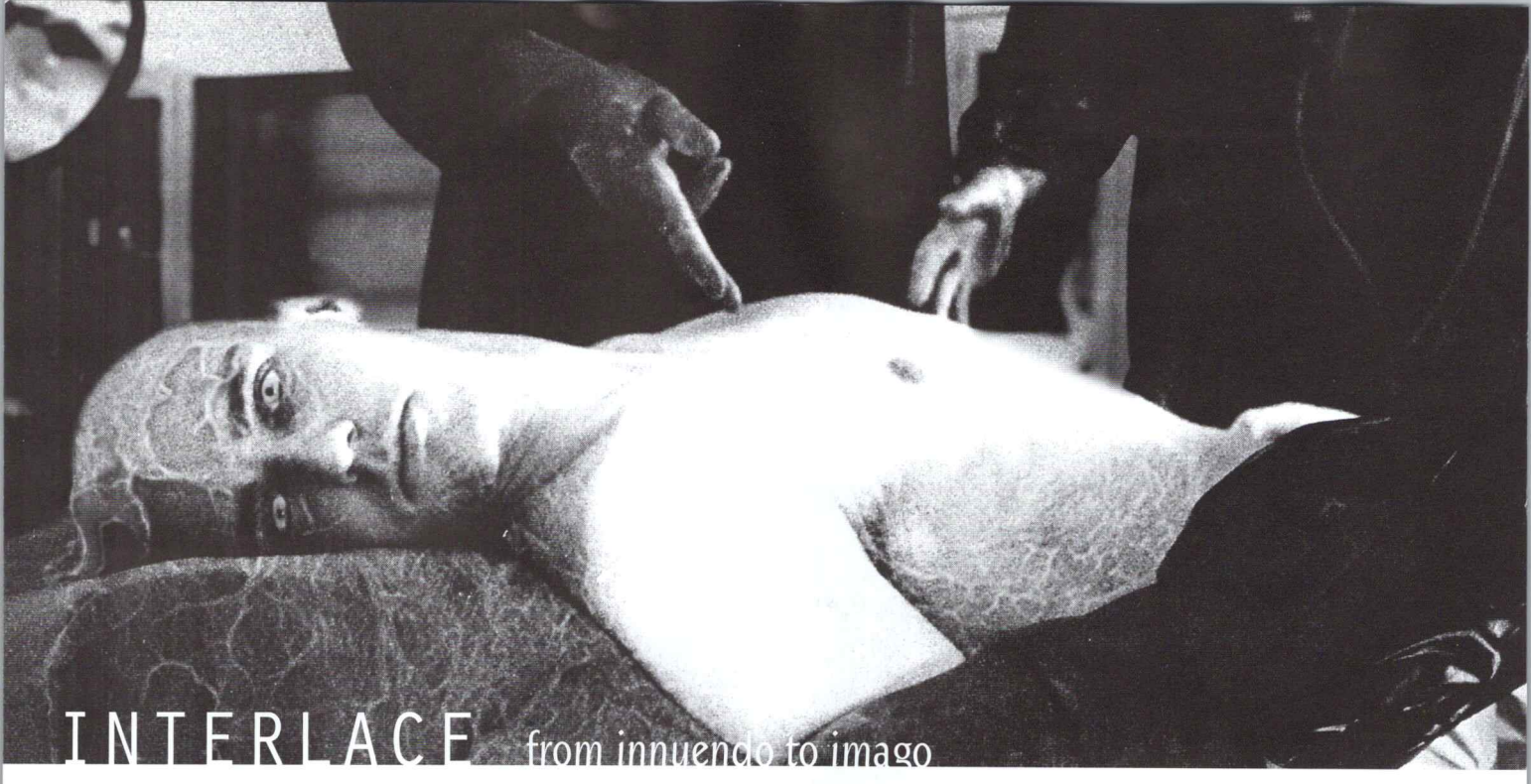




INTERLACE from innuendo to imago

The Swedish dark elektro act Interlace appeared in 2002 with an extremely mature-sounding debut album that earned them positive reviews and a stint as opening act for Suicide Commando. Two years after the release of "Innuendo", Interlace's second full-length, "Imago", is emerging from the incubator. We caught up with the group to get some information about the progress of the Interlace project.

Your liner notes and website do not mention the names of any of Interlace's members. In fact, any kind of information at all about the project is fairly scarce. Why?

O • In the society in which we live today, creative effort is not regarded so much in the light of its outcome as of its source. That is, the artist has become more important than the art. Just look at how people behave at a museum; first they read the little sign that tells them who painted the picture, then they look at the picture itself. It seems people are lost without a ready context to put everything into, and utterly afraid to trust and defend their own opinion on what is beautiful and important. One could interpret this behaviour as a reflection of people using art for self-identification rather than for pleasure or reflection. We treat artists - or celebrities - as clan leaders, joining their tribe by consuming their products and thereby finding a meaningful context for ourselves. The transformation of celebrities into universal guides of thought and behaviour is hardly flattering for the human race. The presidential election in the USA this fall could serve as an example. Many American actors and entertainers have chosen to get involved in the campaign, promoting either party to their fans. Contemplate this for a second. Instead of making up our own mind about the way our country should be governed, we let our favorite artists do it for us. This is, needless to say, not an American phenomenon - it's a global one. We follow our clan leaders, who happen to be the people we see most frequently on TV. Interlace can't reverse this development. But we have no wish to support it either, which we feel we'd do by talking publicly about our private lives. We hope, and believe, that what we create through Interlace is valuable enough in its own right.

You have mentioned that Interlace existed as a concrete concept with very specific goals years before your debut CD. Has the project been progressing according to plan?

O • It has, although there have been some deviations. For example, the signing to Dependent in 2003 resulted in two different Under the Sky releases. Besides the original version, there was also an extended, German, version containing several Innuendo tracks as well. The German release was obviously not a conceptual twist but rather a marketing decision. Under the Sky belonged to Innuendo, the first phase of Interlace. During Innuendo a foetus was conceived and cloned. With Imago, Interlace has now entered its second conceptual phase. It revolves around the foetus' first physical encounter with the world outside its incubator. To capture this development musically, we have made Imago rougher than its predecessor and prioritized dynamics over smoothness in the production.

Headscan are signed to Artoffact Records, and remixed one of your songs on the "Under the Sky" EP.

O • Yolk, who runs Artoffact, showed an early interest in Interlace, and it was he who suggested a remix collaboration between Headscan and us. We're excited to be part of Artoffact's roster; they're committed to their artists, and display great knowledge of how the American market works.

Interlace has traded remixes with Akira Yamaoka, composer of the music for the "Silent Hill" video games. How did these collaborations come about?

O • We sent a copy of Innuendo to Akira and his Team Silent, suggesting a collaboration if they liked what they heard. They did, and so we met in Stockholm during their European promotion tour for Silent Hill 3.

You stated in previous interviews that your first album, "Innuendo", was completed in three months - no small feat! Did "Imago" take longer to record?

O • When we went on tour with Suicide Commando last fall, we only had a few musical sketches for Imago. It was after we returned, in early November, that the work really began. We delivered the master copy to Memento Materia in February, so yes - it took about three months this time too. Not that we had planned this in advance though; it would be quite absurd to deliberately put yourself under such immense pressure. Rather, the process was delayed for several reasons, but we decided to keep the original deadline anyhow since we knew that many people were anxious to get the results. Admittedly, we worked insane hours in order to fit the pieces together, and we'll try to avoid ending up in the same situation again. At the same time, Imago turned out to be a very balanced album in terms of spontaneity versus detail. It is thoroughly produced, and yet has a live feel and warmth to it.

Legendary acts like Skinny Puppy and Clock DVA are often cited as strong influences on your past work. Do you feel that these influences persist on "Imago"?

O • Not as strongly, no. On Innuendo we included a number of cues to identifying our musical roots, but we didn't see any reason for doing so this time. Instead we have focused all energy on developing what we feel Interlace is all about. However, this doesn't implicate that Imago sounds very different from our previous releases. We're confident that those who liked Innuendo and Under the Sky will appreciate Imago too.

Who did the album artwork for "Imago"?

O • Teiaiel, with whom we have worked closely since the beginning, joined Dave McKean in London to do computer graphics for his movie 'Mirror Mask'. She introduced him to Interlace and suggested they should do the sleeve design for Imago together. Dave agreed, and so he did the front cover while Teiaiel did the inside.

BY PAUL VERMEREN

no remix abuse in the h-zone NEBULA-H

Nebula-H is a collaboration between Deranged Psyche (formerly of Fuze Box Machine) and Mika Goedrijk (mastermind of This Morn' Omina and partner in Andraculoid and Pow[d]er Pussy), which fuses EBM and trance in a more innovative way than most acts that describe themselves with these terms. They have followed up their brilliant debut with a new album, "H20". Here, the group responds to our questions about their latest acts of "electronic misbehaviour".

BY PAUL VERMEREN

You've done well so far being a young band...

DP • Indeed, Mika and I met more or less 3 years ago now. Alfa-Matrix put our very first song "White light" on the "Cyberlab Vol.3"-sampler, which got quite a lot of enthusiastic reactions. After we'd composed 4 or 5 songs, we got an offer to sign on Alfa-Matrix so we went on to write an entire album. After the considerable response to the "H"-album and several live shows, we just went on and here comes "H20".

Your first album, "H", contained several songs about prominent figures from the history of art, and your new CD deals with the subject of painters and writers again? Where did the decision for such an unusual focus come from?

DP • When we set up Nebula-H, we of course had to write some lyrics! I like the idea to work about a concept, only from a pure lyrical point of view. I didn't exactly feel the need to write about the usual dark themes the electronic underground scene is dealing with for more than 20 years now. Jesus, what else can you write about killings, suicide, war, s/m, political statements etc. except repeating the same again and again. I think that there's nothing easier to write about one of your own passions! I'm really fascinated by arts and especially movements like surrealism, symbolism, dark expressionism and I now feel a growing fascination for the renaissance. I do believe that music can be seen as a part of 'art' and the cultural life so I only deal with another form of art. On "H20" we already wrote some lyrics about painters like F. Khnopff, R. Baes, E. Munch and L. Da Vinci, but still about film directors like A. Hitchcock and again D. Lynch and S. Kubrick. There're 2 songs about writers as well, who are O. Wilde and J. Verne and another song with a wink to P. Nougé. Last, but not least there's also a song about photographer J.P. Witkin and a few more irrational ideas. It's nothing else, but passion and an item I can talk on for hours and hours even if I don't consider myself as a 'specialist'!

Who is responsible for the video clips that accompany "H2O"?

DP • The clip of "Symbiosis" has been entirely done from A 'til Z by ourselves. I wrote the story and found the location and the actors, but the main and most important job has been done by Mika! He did everything of the technical part of the clip and the entire DVD! You can see and consider the DVD as an entity of 6 different clips including -2 live impressions -the clip of "Symbiosis" -a clip made by new pictures of the band (featuring an exclusive mix of "Fragments") -an exclusive song (cf. "Andalusion"), which is a 'featuring' with Pangea and last, but not least -a previously unreleased promo-clip of "Renaissance Posthume", which is a song of our debut-cd.

I understand you have some live performances planned for Belgium in support of your new CD. What can audiences expect from Nebula-H on stage?

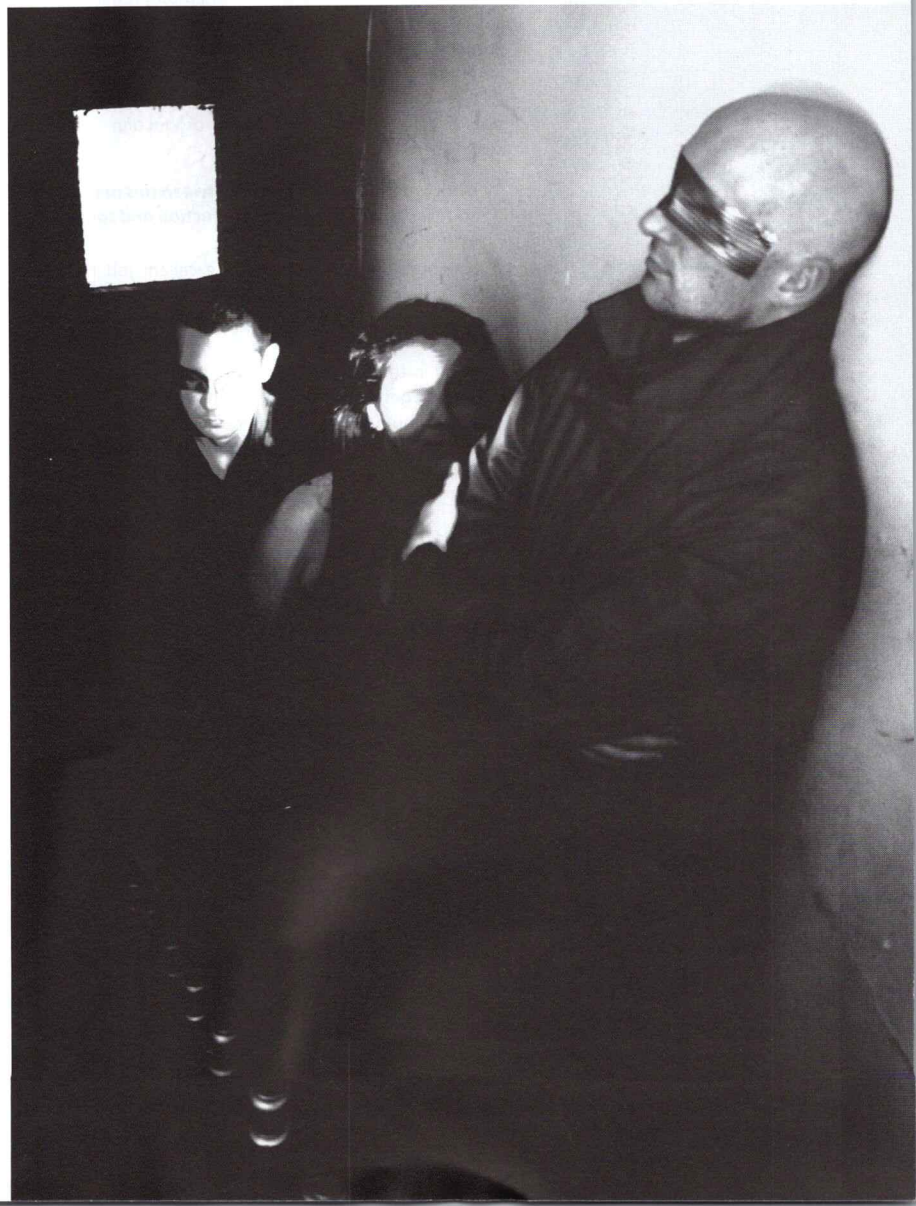
DP • Well, to be honest with you, we only have one gig planned in Belgium for so far. It seems that we're not always that popular by the Belgian organizers... (laughs), but we do get the recognition outside the country! We played at the 2nd edition of the "Vampire festival" in Antwerp together with Suicide Commando, Lights Of Euphoria and a few more bands. We felt very happy to play in Antwerp because the local scene over there seems to really like Nebula-H. Thanks guys! More concerts are to follow. Our live concept didn't change though and we're still joined on stage by our VJ (Goahoma) for some real hypnotic and psychedelic live animation.

You avoid remixes, instead you have featurings, please explain.

DP • Indeed, we have never asked any other band to remix us because we prefer to keep total control on our stuff and that's the reason why we started on the debut-album with the concept of 'featurings'. For "H20", we did a featuring with Geert De Wilde of Pangea for the "Andalusion"-song, which is an exclusive song on the DVD. The idea is to invite a band we like in our studio and create something together. This is much more personal than sending your remix over the net. You're working face to face together and we've been always satisfied with the result. For "Andalusion", which is based on "Un chien Andalou", which is this surrealistic cult movie by L. Bunuel and S. Dali, Geert of Pangea worked out some ideas in his own studio and than came to us. Mika and him than worked out the song, which was achieved in one single long studio session and I really like the result! Even before getting signed on Alfa-Matrix, we had decided to refuse doing any remix. I think bands can better concentrate to work and improve their own music than working on others stuff. That's just a personal point of view.

But what do you exactly hate about remixes?

DP • I don't like the idea of a remix, but I regret the remix-abuse! I think it's quite cheap and less original to fill a cd (which is than sold as an e.p) containing different remixes, but only made by other bands. We prefer to make our own remixes, but only when we feel that a remix can show a different approach in style and influences for example or when you feel that you can improve the original version of the song. We've been asked by many bands to remix one of their songs and every time it's a real pity to refuse... just because we don't want to hurt other musicians. But... if Madonna (yep, she's simply one of my favorite artists) or Björk or Juno Reactor would ask us for a remix... hmmm... that would be difficult to refuse for me (laughs).



NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

The german electro-pop project Phraze is about to release its debut album "Cyclic motions" in the autumn of 2004 through Black Flames Records. ✖✖✖ Fusspils 11, a side-project for Funker Vogt, is ready to launch its second release. The title of the upcoming album is "Alarm für Fusspils 11 - Die Electro-Polizei" which explains why SPV calls this 'Spaß-Elektro', german for 'fun-electro'. Besides original tracks you will also find coverversions of the Lindenberg classic "Bodo Ballermann" or yet "Die wilde Rose" ("Where the wild roses grow") by Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue. The band's first release under the name of Fusspils 11 was "Gib ihr einen Namen" out on Repo Records. The SPV released "Alarm für Fusspils 11 - Die Electro-Polizei" will hit the stores in early October. ✖✖✖ The Belgian label Alfa Matrix has announced new singings of which one will certainly ring more than one bell: Sero.Overdose For those that remember the exquisite "Serotonin" album, a tense waiting time has begun! Sero.Overdose are currently putting the last touch to their new album "No Time For Silence" to be released early 2005. The other new signee is the USA solo act Unter Null (aka Erica Dunham), the first 100% female replica to the hard-hitting dark electronic realms of bands like Suicide Commando, Hocico, etc. She's currently finalising her album to be released early 2005. ✖✖✖ Yavin 4 is the side-project of T.O.Y. keyboarder Oliver Taranczewski. Together with producer Stefan Voigt of Plastic he has created the electronic soundscape project, Yavin 4. Yavin 4 combines modern drum & bass grooves with industrial noise to create a unique electronic sound of it's own. The debut album "Otherworld Technologies" will be released late September or early October on the Chicago based Negative Gain Productions. ✖✖✖ SPR aka Synthetic Product Records, the label run by the ex-manager of De/Vision, Lorenz Macke, has several new releases coming up, Out first is the De/Vision DVD "Pictures of the past". SPR also announces the signing of two new bands: ReActivate, a german band with some future pop elements whose debut cd will be released in the year 2005, and Kartagon. ✖✖✖ Over the course of eleven years, popular alternative band Collide has kept fans happy with five fantastic full-length albums, all of which have received critical acclaim and impressive sales figures. But even with everything that Collide has delivered, its fans have been patiently waiting for one more thing: a concert. On October 31, 2004, that patience will be rewarded as Collide performs its first live show ever. With increasing demands from promoters in many countries and an ever-expanding fan base, the band finally had to make the time to prepare for live performances. "During the past few months we've got together a great bunch of musicians to help fill out the live version of Collide, and have been busy with rehersals. The songs are taking on a new life of their own. I think it's been a greater experience than either of us ever expected," says Statik of Collide. Collide's debut concert will take them from their Los Angeles homes across the country to Philadelphia. ✖✖✖ "I'm not dreaming of you" is the title of the exclusive US-only single from De/Vision's new album, "6 Feet Underground". Released through A Different Drum the original album version and the extended club mix are both included on the single, plus a trance mix by Nevarakka which may remind you of De/Vision's vocal work with Green Court. Plus, there are two completely new remixes of "Aimee". ✖✖✖ Violent Entity has signed on Black Rain. In a pressrelease the label says that "the one man project from North America presents harsh EBM with a lot of old school influences and a quite unique voice". The work on the CD "Mechanized Division" is still in progress and will be released in fall 2004. The band will support Manufactura as a guest musician on their US-tour. ✖✖✖ God Module are hard at work on their 3rd full length CD, "False Pretense". Look for the disc to be released late 2004 - early 2005 on Sector 9 Studios in the US and Out Of line in Europe. The first single from the CD will be released in Europe on Out of Line for the track "Victims Among Friends" in October 2004. The single will feature remixes of "VAF" from Suicide Commando and Amduscia. God Module will be performing 4 live dates in Germany as part of the Out Of Line festival dates in November 2004. After the release of "False Pretense" expect to see tour-dates for both the states and Europe in early 2005. ✖✖✖ Although announced for the summer of 2004, the new Neuroticfish album "Gelb" (German for yellow) will be released in spring 2005.

SERO.OVERDOSE

better than best? this the proof!

After a first album "Serotonin", released in 2002 on Trisol / Matrix Cube, the German trio returns on a new label, Alfa Matrix, with a new album entitled "No time for "limited" silence". For those that wondered whether the best had been reached already in strong electropop, time to rejudge this because it looks like Sero.Overdose are to deliver the best melodic electro album for this and the next year. The first comments from the selected lot of journalists that had the opportunity to listen to advance CD's was more than overwhelmingly positive already. A talk with the band was unavoidable and more than wanted!

Hi Andy, Mike and Olli! So, tell me, from one Matrix to another, why did you change of label?

S • We felt there needed to be more focusing on Sero.Overdose, and Alfa Matrix was the perfect label for which we decided. We are currently getting every cent together to get back the rights of the first release "Serotonin" because of the request of people who want to get our first CD. With EFA, the distributor, collapsing we never got the chance for a re-release at our first label. We are also not sure of the way how to release "Serotonin" at the moment, but we are checking all possibilities.

Let's talk about your current baby now. The second album is generally seen as the riskiest. Did you feel more pressure for this one?

S • Do you think it is the second? I thought that the riskiest was always the third... (laughs)! Well, actually we do not feel any pressure, no. We have constantly worked on our coming release in between all other productions and projects, and we believe this will be a big hit. We have concentrated on our growing and sound production. This is the second step to our perfection.

What are the big differences between this new album and "Serotonin" in term of production and song writing?

S • André, our vocalist, did an excellent job, he added some vocal tunes never heard before. He had about two years now to work out more on his voice. Believe me, he sounds the same live on stage! The production quality was growing in the time from the first album till now, and we decided to get a little straighter and deeper into the sound. The first album was a little more minimalistic if you compare it with the new album. We have very good club tracks, as well as some songs for home listening. The new album is worked out with a concept, and we found more and more our style. If you listen to the new album, you will get captured by feelings which it creates! The lyrics are mostly written by our singer, and presents some flights into our minds, thoughts and wishes. A lot of tracks are written out of our surroundings, and things what happened. Some lyrics are very personal and reflects some sitiuations we where in during the time of production.

Mike, how do you manage to compose for all your different projects? The sound of Virtual Embrace is certainly the opposite to the sound of Sero.overdose...

S • I've been asked a lot of times about how I find my ideas to compose new songs for my different projects without loosing my inspiration... As always I say I am very open minded to music in different styles. I like to listen to music from the 50's to trance, to Linking Park stuff, to classical music, and also pop and commercial, industrial and EBM to Ambient. This helps me finding always lots of ideas for my songs. I am not stuck into only one style like many musicians are! Sero.Overdose is a project with a lot of feel and harmony. It is dance and pop oriented. Other people would call it maybe future pop, or electro/synth pop... just for the orientation of course. Sero.Overdose's singer André is a very good vocalist, which you never heard before from any of the so called Future Pop projects of what you know till now. It combines deeply sung voices with straiten arranged club tracks, as well as his unique and somehow sexy male vocals together with some pop styled tracks and ballads.

What did you learn from your satellite projects? Do you prefer any?

S • I do not think there is a project that is more important than the other. Every project has its own importance to me. They all give me the possibility to let free my mind and inspiration of creating just wonderful music in any direction.

What can we expect from the new forthcoming Sero.overdose tour?

S • First we will work hard on some smaller live-shows before we plan a tour. We need to check first our possibilities of touring. The market is over flooded with new releases, so that it seems to be hard for organisers to choose the good bands. But as a tour is planned, you can expect a great show, with great musicians, and of course the great voice of our singer.

Sero.overdose have made some interesting remixes for bands like Aiboforcen, Perfidious Words, Bruderschaft, ... Can you give me the top 3 sero.overdose remixers of your dream.

S • Ok, if I would choose a remixer for mixing Sero.Overdose, I would like to have a remix from Moby, Prodigy or even Metallica. I like diversity more then remixes that sounds almost the same, or in a similar style... Also I would like to remix such acts too.

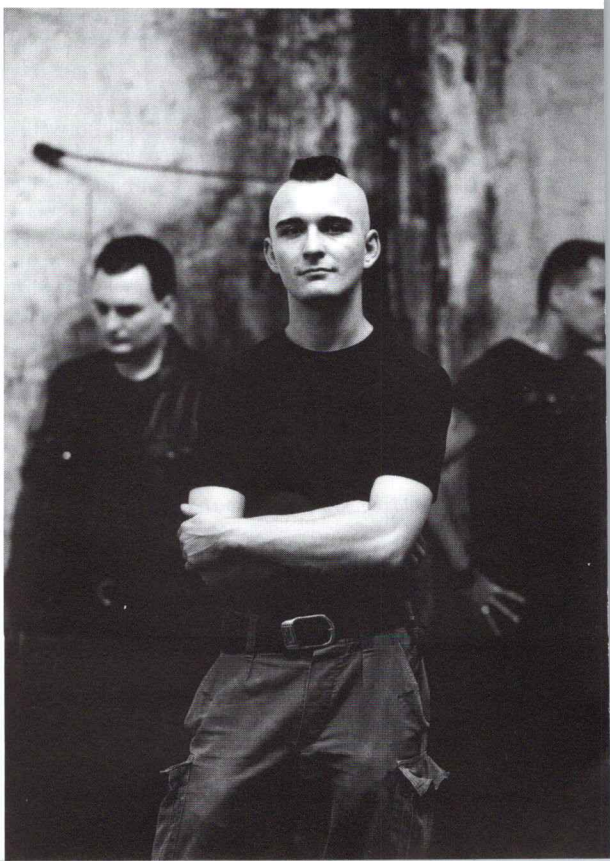
I also heard a video was on the planning for the new album? Is this correct?

S • Yes, that's true. But until now we don't know how it will look like. We are currently starting to work something out, but at this point of time I can't say more.

Any last words?

S • Oh yes, "Music is our Castle, our Castle is our Home, our Home is our Music" . Check our new website : www.sero-overdose.de for a lot of cool stuff to download. We will place some goodies to our fans in the coming days, and we will upload new stuff about every month.

BY CEDRIC WATTERGNIAUX



"Happy Mystery Child" marks in stone the return of the French cold wave cult-band Trisomie 21 who had a very prolific discography on P.I.A.S. in the good old 80's and early 90's next to all the great names of the moment ranging from Front 242 to Neon Judgement, through Young Gods or yet a;GRUMH... The new album will please all fans of the band's successful "Chapter IV" period, even if it reveals a more mature song-writing approach and more polished and refined melody works and strengthened choruses. The T21 gang opened us the doors of their studio while they were busy preparing their forthcoming tour.

7 years of silence... We had expected you to resurrect only 21 years later? What was the trigger to this unexpected comeback?

T • T21 never stopped really, but the communication with our label Pias was not very good, after "Gohohako" we decided to wait until our contract had ended. There had always been a passion around the group, and when the T21 machine restarted, we saw the future as being very exciting. We are in a full creative effervescence! To work on HMC was a real pleasure!

What have you guys been doing during all this time? Anything music/art-related?

T • T21 seemed to have fallen asleep in the eyes of the public, but we nevertheless never ceased emitting. We took part in several compilations: "La planète bleue", "Sensations pourpres" (Kenzo), "Ballades nocturnes" with the new "Youth called to edge" and we also made a remix of "Grand secret" for the band Indochine. It also took us a certain time to make Trisomie21 evolve soundwise, and also visually with the launching of our web site by Todd E Jones, a New York fan, at www.trisomie21.com. We also had some line-up changes: we have worked with Bruno Objoie now who had already contributed guitars on the album "Works". There is also a new member: Martin Blohorn who handles keyboards and programming. Working on "Happy Mystery Child" took almost 2 years of our life. It all started rather slowly, but then the arrival of Martin and our long-time friend Olivier Lechevestrier, who now cares for our management, accelerated the whole process!

Technically, the computer evolution and all have drastically changed the landscape of electronic music writers. How much have these new technologies had any impact in your working methods when composing/recording new songs?

T • We used digital technology, especially Soundscape's red system and also vintage machines because we wanted a clear hot sound. For us HMC is very special because keyboards, loops and guitars have all been played in real time, without the help of computers. The very important part of the work was to meet together, develop song structures while respecting the surrounding and keeping the "rock aspect" intact.

You know, the first time I listened to the new album, my first reaction was "T21 are back to their roots"... Your reaction?

T • The fact of using the bass sounds more presently in the composition immediately brings the album closer to our "Chapter IV" album than to other productions. In this sense, it's a fact that this new album marks a return to our roots, closer to our classics songs like "The last song" than the previous album "Gohohako".

The album's production holds a subtle touch of modernity. I was wondering, for your live shows, did you rework the good old unavoidable hits like "Joh' Burg", "The Last Song", "Il Se Noie" or yet "La Fête Triste"?

T • We will mix the new ones and the old pieces because we want to present the whole horizon, the different faces of T21. It's with joy that we return ourselves in old songs, and with humility that we will play the new ones. Of course all will not be there cos a selection is unavoidable.

I know some live dates are already on your planning for the next months... Can we expect anything special for the show?

T • Yes T21 will be back on stage as of November 28th in Paris at the Locomotive. We do not have all details on the line up yet. What is certain, it's that the 4 members of the band will be present. We want to present live a much more "rock" and far from the last show "the performance" which was primarily based on video projections and stage acting.

Your CD also comes out as a limited edition with remixes... Is it a pure commercial approach or is there a real conceptual approach behind it?

T • For the very first time we have given our songs to 30 remixers or bands which we appreciate and gave them white card for their remix. We did not impose them to respect any structure or melody, we entirely trust them. It was interesting for us to reach new horizons in different music orientations, so the intention was more conceptual than commercial, although we got a few straight dance mixes.

With such a long career behind your back, if I'd ask you the 5 best things which have happened to T21 since its ignition, which ones would that be?

T • 1. The release of our debut album "Le repos des enfants heureux", an unforgettable moment. 2. The warm reactions to concerts we made during our tour for "Chapter IV", we played in Reims (France) at the 'Festival de musique de traverse' and the audience was so crazy that we had to perform a second time the same night although it was not even planned! There was also our gig in Paris at the Rex club together with Rene Valentin. 3. Our work on the soundtrack for the movie "Pushing the limits". 4. The enthusiasm of people who have remixed our songs and the quality of their work. 5. Our Canadian tour for the "Million lights" tour. And I'll probably add our future with the new album and concerts to come as 6th (laugh).

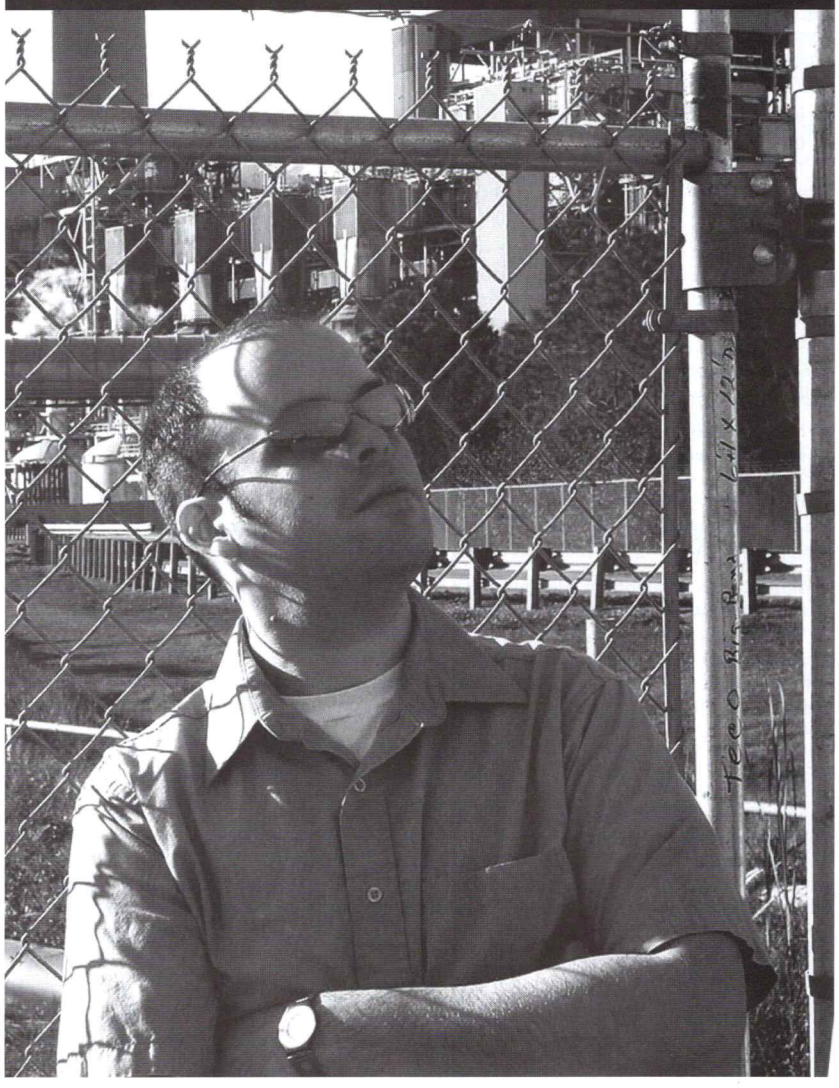
What about the worst now?

T • As first again a concert in Reims a few years later in the "Théâtre du chemin vert" where the promoter had no respect for the band nor the audience. And of course our collaboration with our previous label PIAS. I also realize that working closer together would have allowed us to evolve differently...

BY SÉBA DOLIMONT

THE PARALLEL PROJECT

exploratory fusion of minds



Alex Matheu, the mastermind behind the worldwide EBM phenomenon Negative Format and uber-remixing genius, has unleashed his newest dancefloor assault under the rather auspice name, 'Parallel Project.' Incorporating original compositions with various guest vocalists from all points of the electronic music spectrum, we're treated to a delicacy of epic proportions. Where else can a scene listener be spoiled with the talents of Tom Shear (A23), Sandrine Gouriou (Seize), Ned Kirby (Stromkern), Victorial Lloyd (Claire Voyant), Jennifer Parkin (Ayria) and Daniel Myer (Haujobb), amongst others, on one record? It's the event disc of the year and we've uncovered the dirty details for you from the man himself:

Explain how the initial conception for Parallel Project began, the name origin and your motivations for following through on this goal.

A • I have wanted to collaborate with artists for quite some time, but have always been wary of changing the sound of Negative Format. I decided to collaborate in the form of a side project, but I didn't want to just have a side project that was doing the same sort of thing. I wanted it to be something special. I chose to not provide any vocals for the project, and to recruit different vocalists for each track to accomplish this. I was motivated to create an album that had a lot of variety, but still flowed well. I believe I have accomplished this through Fusion. The Parallel Project started out as just Parallel, I was working on tracks with a 2 friends (Ben Schingel and Danny Paradise.) We only completed 1 track in 2000 and landed it on a compilation on Inception Records. After some research I found there was another band with the name Parallel. I chose Parallel Project because it describes the side project, it is more of a project than a band, since it has an ever changing roster.

You've become quite respected for remixing some of the biggest underground electro names. How easy or difficult was it to pitch this idea to your peers?

A • Actually I have never seeked remixes out, I am quite busy writing tracks for a lot of projects. I am usually contacted by others for mixes. Unfortunately there have been a lot that I have had to turn down because of time constraints. As far as the initial reactions from people that hear my mixes, they are very good. I put my all into my mixes, and I have written whole songs behind a few vocals in many occasions. I have contemplated putting together a compilation of all my mixes for release. I do enjoy remixing a lot.

Was there anyone who you asked to lend vocals but didn't/couldn't/refused?

A • There was one vocalist that could not provide vocals, because of scheduling, but will most likely appear on the next disc. I will leave them unnamed, but let you know that it is a male vocalist with a phenomenal voice from Texas, USA.

Once the artists were on board, what was the next step? Lyrics or production?

A • The next step was production. I created music structures for verses, and choruses. I then placed each piece for the artists to hear online. They downloaded these and created the lyrics. In some cases they came to my studio to record the vocals. In other cases they recorded the vocals in their respective studios, and sent me the files. I then took the vocals, and produced and arranged the music behind them. The workflow was an incredible success, and I look forward to working in this way in the future, and will apply this methodology to my other projects.

What kinds of studio challenges did you face collaborating with so many different vocal styles? How difficult was it to musically create a specific mood/style for each range?

A • The artists I worked with were all fantastic, they all hit the moods of the tracks dead on, with minimal retries. The most challenging aspect was coordination, distance, and time. It was quite a big undertaking working with so many people at once. Working with a wide variety of vocal styles was one of the biggest studio challenges. I researched vocal processing for different styles extensively, and learned a lot in the process. It really gave me a chance to work with vocal elements that I don't work with in my other projects. All of the artists I worked with deserve a giant pat on the back for bearing with me through the whole process and seeing it through to the end.

Heads turned when it was announced Mark Jackson (VNV Nation percussionist) lent his vocals for 'Deleted Scenes.' Tell us how this originated and were you surprised at the positive feedback?

A • We played with VNV Nation at Wave Gothik Treffen 2003, this is when I had the idea to ask Mark Jackson for a vocal. I had met Mark a few times before and he is a great guy. I told him about the project, and asked him if he would be interested. He was very interested and has been a great supporter ever since. I am not surprised, Mark has a great voice. I enjoyed having such a surprise for the scene on this release. People are still talking about that track. I am sure we will hear more of Mark's voice in the future.

What future 'projects' can we expect from Alex Matheu for the rest of '04 into '05?

A • I am currently working on the new Negative Format release entitled "Moving Past the Boundaries" Look for this release on Sector 9 Studios and Out of Line, in early 2005. I have another 2 projects that I am working on also, one is a long time running project "distraub" (Dark D'N'B / Tech) and the other is a new noisier IDM project without a solid name. In 2005 I will begin working on a follow up to The Parallel Project "Fusion", look for this in late 2005. I have just finished remixing 2 tracks MonoChorme's "Sold" and HMB's "The Metro" (Berlin Cover) which should be released shortly, and will be remixing Glis.

BY DAN KOVEN

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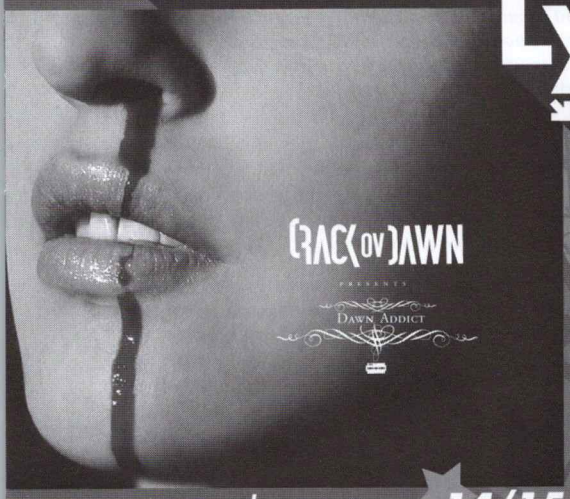

Legacy mag **14/15**

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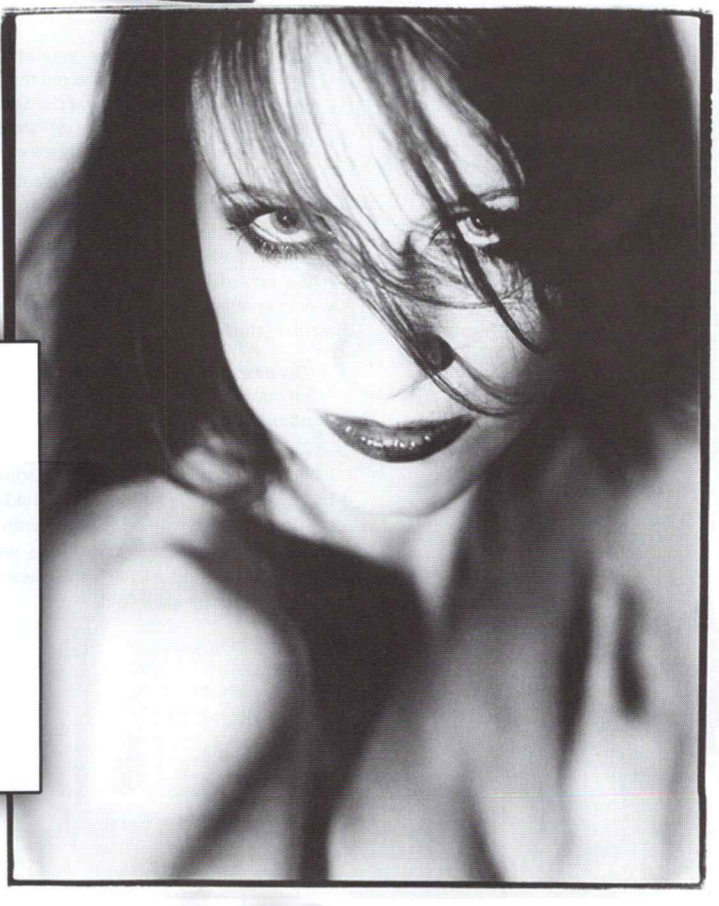

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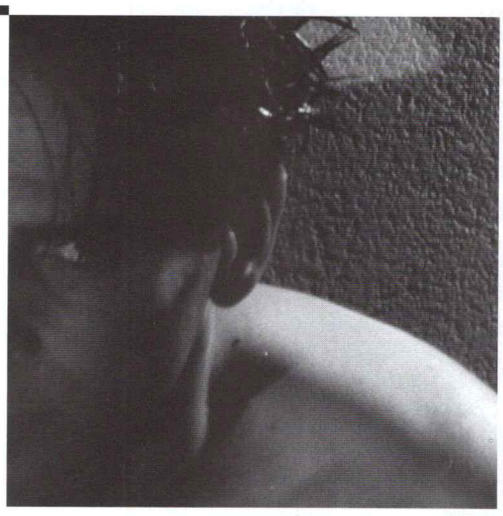


beyond the sun

Besides Front 242 and maybe Neon Judgement, Dirk Ivens is definitely one of the few Belgian electronic music pioneers who has managed to remain constantly progressive in his creative process through Klinik, Dive or yet Sonar. He's now about to release his new Dive album "Behind The sun" on which he has worked with the talented Rafael M. Espinosa from Geistform fame. The album furthermore features the vocal presence by the well-known female Dutch DJ MS. Poly-Ester. Lingering entrancing minimal electro/industrial arrangements reminding us how much "less" can be "more"! "Behind The sun" will rapidly reach the cult status of "Concrete Jungle" and will mark one more milestone in Dive's impressive discography. We caught up with the master to discuss his latest sonic assault.

Dive's new album has been described as a return to the roots of the project. Would you agree with that description?

D • Not totally I must say, I think that the new album sounds not that distorted but it has a different kind of power. The sound is very open, very melodic and you can almost hear each layer in the music and the bass is overwhelming. Of course the production of Eric van Wonterghem and the collaboration with another great musician means a lot and therefore we can speak of a new angle in the Dive direction. From my point of view, this is the perfect Dive sound for today.

That other great musician, your labelmate Rafael Espinosa (Geistform), delivered the instrumental part in the realization of "Behind the Sun". Is the interaction between Rafael and yourself similar to the past cooperation with Ivan Iusco of Nightmare Lodge?

D • This time it was different, Rafael sent me some music and I then cut it into pieces and put a song structure to it. Later on I started writing lyrics and finally added my voice on top of it. All in all it was a lot of work, even more than I had expected, but I must say that I am very happy with the way everything worked out and I hope to work with him again in the future.

The new album features guest vocals by Ms. Poly-Ester on one track ("Nobody Else"). Could you tell us more about her, and how this collaboration came about?

D • She is a rather well-known noise DJ from Holland and I heard her for the first time on some tracks from the Hybryds. I instantly realised that she had a great voice. In the past she has also worked together with This Morn' Omina, H.I.V.+ and several others. So, it was very easy to get her phone number and ask her if she was interested to sing on a track, which she gladly did.

In the past, releases by Dive have seemed to revolve around the concept of human isolation and insanity. Thematically, what can listeners expect from "Behind the Sun"?

D • Relationships, madness in the world, feelings and so on. You can say the normal Dive ingredients (laughs)...

You generally keep busy with plenty of live performances with your various projects. Are there any specific plans for Dive outings in support of this new CD?

D • Yes, we plan to hit the road in support of this release. At this moment we are working on gigs around November/December 2004 and January 2005. The album comes out on the 1st of November and of course the feedback of the people and promoters is important. But be sure, there are many songs on this album which will be a blast live.

If my calculations are correct, 2004 also marks your 25th year of being involved with music starting way back in 1979 with The Few. This makes you a bit of an "elder statesman" in the realm of electronic music, if you'll excuse the term. How do you feel about that?

D • What can I say... (thinks) music is my life and I can only be happy to be around for such a long time. I'm still on top of it and alive and kicking! (Laughs) Music changed a lot during that time and I saw bands coming and going, but I can look back on a great time with my projects like Absolute Body Control, The Klinik, Sonar and Dive. Hopefully we can continue for a long time, all in all keeping yourself busy is the magic thing to do.

Your work is listed as an influence by countless electronic artists. What acts have influenced you (if any) through all those years?

D • The most important band for me was the N.Y based group Suicide. When I heard their first record way back in 1978 I instantly knew that was it, that was what music had to be for me. When I heard that intensive underground electronic sound, it was such a great impact that literally changed my life. For the rest, I observe the music of today like any other musician and pick some things out without losing my touch for my own style.

Venturing back into old territory for a moment - the much sought-after original Klinik box was recently re-released by Hands productions. Are there plans for other releases from the Klinik back-catalogue through Hands? Perhaps a recording of the live performance at Wave Gotik Treffen?

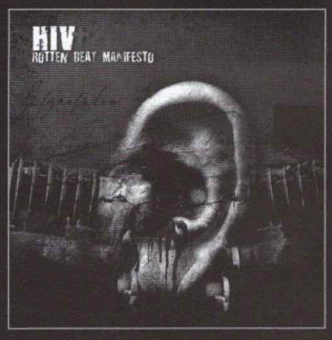
D • Yes, the complete back-catalogue will be coming out on Hands. We are happy about it because through the years we had so many requests for it you know... And good news for you, because we recorded the gig at the WGT and if everything goes well than it will come out very, very soon too!

Anything you'd like to add for the readers?

D • Well, I have spent a lot of time working on the new album and I can't wait to be on stage again. So I hope to see you at one of the upcoming gigs!

BY PAUL VERMEREN

BLACK FLAMES AUTUMN HURRICANE



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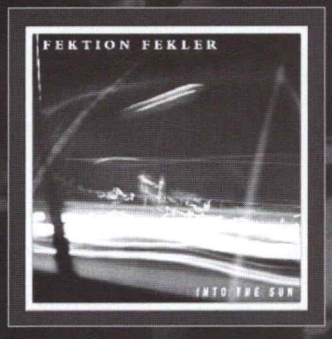

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MINDLESS FAITH gaining momentum

Brothers Chris and Jasin Sevanick formed Mindless Faith after Jasin had played as a guitarist in high school punk bands and Chris had been experimenting with computer and synth technology. Eventually, Jasin started to pick up on his brother's technological interests and in 1996 Mindless Faith was born. Since then, the band have released 3 albums, played numerous eventful live shows, had their music used on MTV and recently signed deals with Metropolis in the US and Dependent in Europe. As Mindless Faith goes from strength to strength and their third album "Momentum" is released, Chris and Jasin take time out to speak to Side-line about the past, present and future of the band.

How does your new material compare to the "Manifest Destiny" album?

CS • The sound of "Momentum" is quite evolved from where we were with "Manifest Destiny". This is due in large part to the higher quality of production we were able to achieve with "Momentum" - so now its a little easier to hear all those layers without having to fight the density of the mix. "Momentum" is also more stylistically technologic and futuristic... perhaps even a bit psychedelic with tripped out soundscapes, whereas "Manifest Destiny" was more industrial-apocalyptic with grittier tones and a more mechanical vibe.

JS • And we're now just different creatures than we were then, with different experiences and different tastes. And it doesn't hurt that we have better tools at our disposal. We might still be relatively gutter-tech, but our arsenal is much improved.

Of all the tracks you have recorded, which were the hardest to finish to your satisfaction and why?

JS • Probably the title track "Momentum". Without getting too technical, it was just difficult to mix and master because there were so many layers and so much density. And that damn EQ for the bass track just wouldn't cooperate. With earlier versions, I also got carried away and put distortion on everything... to the point of over-saturation. But aside from the technical aspects, there were numerous parts we recorded but couldn't include unless the song would be 10+ minutes in length. So, we had to chop out a lot. But, despite the difficulties, I am so pleased with the end result. It's one of my favorite tracks.

What message do you think your music purveys? Is there a message?

JS • Well, the concepts behind the name Mindless Faith are the broad message in the music and the words. But different tracks explore different themes. "Vultures" (the opening track on "Manifest Destiny") was a sharp attack against opportunism and corporateering. But I guess not all of our tracks impart such a clear message. Sometimes a little ambiguity makes it more interesting, and other times it's best to simply leave it all to interpretation.

How would you describe your creative process?

JS • All in all, we try to approach songs without any formulas. If a song sounds better with some obscure banjo part, then fuck it, we're using the banjo. Now that I'm in DC and Chris is in NY, we frequently collaborate online. We'll work independently on material and tweaking our mixes, and then we'll upload stuff for the other.

CS • Of course, we do get together as well to record and mix after J structures out the basic framework of a track. And having a laptop, I'll sometimes be working on material when I'm on the subway, or when I outside at a park.

Do any of you have any side projects away from Mindless Faith?

JS • A few years ago, we began a couple side-projects that we didn't pursue to any real extent. But we currently do have an unnamed project that will get more attention once we devote our energies to the new Mindless Faith release. The material is ambient and chilled downtempo, in the vein of the more atmospheric tracks on "Momentum"... like "The Unseen". In fact, "The Unseen" was sort of "borrowed" from the side-project. But we have over two hours worth of material on the shelf. So far it's just been Chris and me. Compared to Mindless Faith, the sound isn't as dense. And vocals have been replaced with heavily effected vocal textures that are weaved into the layers of atmospheres, soundsweeps, and chilled percussive elements. The overall sense is both synthetic and organic at once. There are no formal releases yet for the current unnamed project. However, we did have a track called "Ultraviolet" featured on National Public Radio's "All Songs Considered".

CS • Our previous side-project called "Gears Slowly Grinding" and an early solo project of mine called "Vivid Liquid" were only released on "Distention: AlterCulture Records Label Sampler CD" back in 1999.

Chris, tell me about your record label Alterculture Records. How did it start and do you still run the label?

CS • I started the label in part because I have taken DIY to the extreme. I foolishly believed that if the music was good, it would catch on regardless of the limited promotion behind it. I totally underestimated, or maybe more that I just naively ignored, certain factors. Like the importance of a label with an established name. The first artist I wanted to sign was my friend's project Raudive Voices. Unfortunately, somehow things went horribly wrong between RV and me. So the CD never got released. But I also signed a dark ambient project called The Unquiet Void and released the debut CD "Scorpio." Aside from that and 2 Mindless Faith CDs, we also released two compilation tapes (Subversion Comp v.1 and v.2) and a label sampler CD called "Distention" (which featured Raudive Voices, The Unquiet Void, Mindless Faith and Gears Slowly Grinding). But between all the work, the meager sales, and other headaches, I just gave up on the label and have shut it down.

BY PAUL LLOYD

abyrinth features elements of Classical, Flamenco, Arabic, Japanese, African and rock music fused with Juno Reactor's individual lectronic approach. Several tracks demonstrate a mellower sound for the band through the use of extraordinary female vocals to explore a political, emotional, and surreal collision of myth, religion and hope.

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Velvet Acid Christ has returned with the third installment of his Between the Eyes 'vault series'. Between the Eyes Volume 3 contains many mastered unreleased tracks of rarities, outtakes, and original versions from the Church of Acid and Calling ov the Dead eras.

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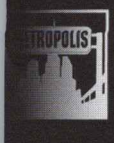

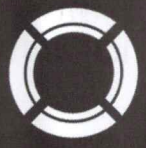

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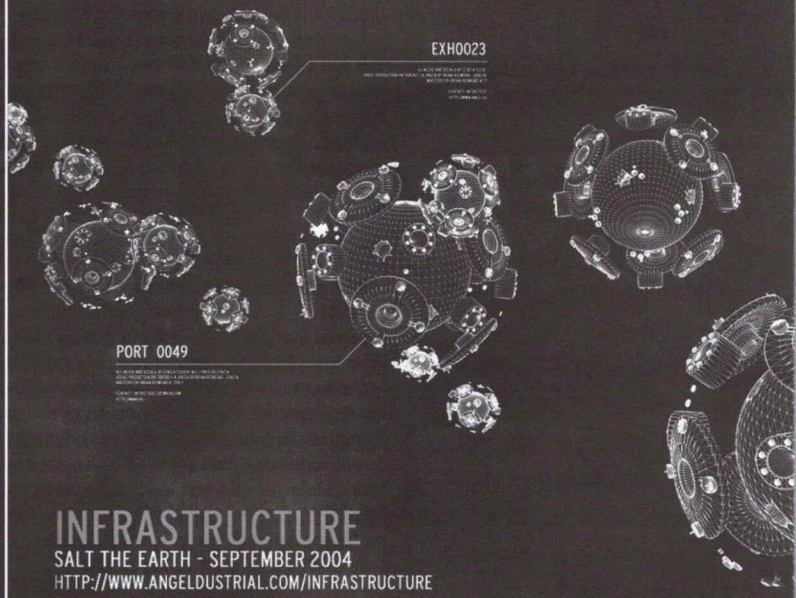

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VIRTUAL><EMBRACE

Virtual><Embrace has landed and is doing a great job so far. The solo-project of Mike Johnson (member of Sero.Overdose, Agonoize, Infekktion...) aka Virtual><Embrace saw its 12-track limited club EP "Roots Of Evil" charting in Germany and was even invited to be part of the famous "Advanced electronics" 2CD compilation showing the highlights of the DAC's past year. The debut album "Escape To Insane" became an instant hit amongst Suicide Commando and Combichrist fans due to its combination of harsh upbeat with harmonic compositions... After one of our editor's last missions, we sent another trooper to meet up with Mike Johnson.

The first EP "Roots of evil" hit the DAC charts by surprise and you even ended up on the next DAC Advanced Electronics 2CD. Did you expect this to happen all so fast?

M • I was even more happy as I got the offer to get a track included on the Advanced Electronics Comp. It is by far the most wanted compilation ever, and it will also be heavily rotated in the clubs around the Globe. To hit the DAC Charts was also very surprising, because I honestly did not expect it. Marc Urban from the Zillo Mag already told me that he likes how it sounds, and he noticed the New Style called "Hellektro".

You are inserting so many different elements in Virtual><Embrace that I sometimes wonder where exactly you take things, ideas from. I know you listen to R´n´B as well, so...

M • Ok, R´n´B is just a small part of my favorite music... But I learned a lot from them, of how to produce and mix a sound right. Their productions are brilliant, it has the best mixing and the Vocal Sound is perfect. I would recommend every musician to listen to commercial music, even if they do not like it, they can learn a lot from it.

You have often mentioned that even 50's rock and roll does play a role in your musical life. Personally I only like a few songs from that era, only Elvis was brilliant if you ask me... what would you advise me to have a listen at?

M • There are sooooooo many great musicians I would recommend... Some of the greatest Bands or Artists are: Dion and the Belmonts, Jean Vincent, Eddy Cochran, The Four Seasons, The Shirelles, Duan Eddy, Ricky Nelson....etc. But you should try to get the Soundtrack of Wanderers, this record has only the best songs! But I also listened to a lot of unknown bands as well, lets call it independent music of the 50´s. I could make you a list, but this Interview would probably not have enough space.... (laughs)! When I was at the age of 15, I started to hang around with some friends and they were all in the Rockabilly scene, that's where my heart still beats, and from that time I learned how to play guitar. That was the very beginning of my music life.

You played guitar? Hard to imagine, it never ended in something did it?

M • No, but I learned a lot about songwriting what helped me now with my projects... I started to collect some of my favorite guitars such as a Gibson Les Paul Custom, Fender Telecaster, and some others... But they are only hanging around right now. The last time I used the Gibson was for one Infekktion track on the last Album.

Blank & Jones are your favourite dance act, have you ever dreamed of starting a second (or x th) career as a dance producer? You certainly have the experience with your "Dark Desire - my deepest fire" experience?

M • Yes of course I would like to, but I watched the market as well. And I can see that Trance or Techno music is falling down now, and there is not that much demand for it anymore as it was before. Just take a look into the media control charts, and you will find not that much Trance anymore in the top 10. I would now prefer more a combination between Pop and Trance... Lets call it Future Pop (grins)!

Can you tell me what person you actually are, character wise? Also, how did this play an influence in Virtual><Embrace?

M • Mmmhhh.... I would say it is very hard to get me out of control, even if I had some beer, I am still a very concentrated person. I am giving help to everybody, what sometimes returns as a nightmare back to me. I had some experience with people who asked me if they could work in my Tattoo Shop which has also an online hub at www.darkstyletattoo.de by the way! They asked if I could teach them, but each time I have spent my time and heart, I suddenly got ripped off...

Sorry to interrupt you, but what kind of tattoos you are specialised in?

M • I am specialised in Dark Styled stuff, 3 dimensional stuff, Biomechanic art, and all what comes out of my mind. I am specialised in freehand tattooing without having a picture. People just telling me their ideas, and I create it right out of my head. All the pictures of my work shown on my website are only freehand tattoos. I also have won a lot of awards in different international tattoo conventions, and now I have been tattooing for about 16 years!

Back to getting ripped off...

M • Well, if you are a nice guy, you will always get ripped off. But sometimes I am still a nice guy (smiles)! In the end I found a better way of working on my own. The problems in the past only made me stronger. I am Sagittarius and I never loose what I am looking for. Virtual><Embrace is my solo project, and was the result of too much working with other people... (laughs)! I had the need to do something on my own without to make compromises.

Does this mean that being an Einzelganger is better for you? Is it better for your creative thinking as well?

M • To be an Einzelgänger is good for my success without to excuse me for what I am doing, and nobody can hold me back. But I am not really only working alone all the time... I am working with Agonoize, Sero.Overdose, and Infekktion, together with different people. But I am still the head of it all! But as you put it, for my creativity I do not need to have a collaboration with somebody. I still can exchange ideas without working together.

BY PATRICK FALQUE

How did you first get noticed by BLC Music your current label?

R • We got noticed by sending them our remix CD "Refractions". BLC is a very tight professional label. We feel we are very fortunate that they took notice of our music for an "Interbreeding" comp they were putting out. That started it all. DJ Cable made the connection to BLC through DSBP, I believe.

Were there any pressures during the making of "Code Breaker"?

B • Yes. Simply for the fact that we all have separate lives away from UV creates some pressure. My perspective on this one is a little different. I have 3 Children 5 and under, I own my own personal training business, and I share care taking of the kids with my wife because we work opposite shifts. The amount of computer programming for this album was a monstrous task for me. I basically programmed every track. I engineered and produced it, so I had to take my demo tracks and Relic's demos and re-tool & re-shape every single sound in every single song until we all agreed on the "sound." It is a lot of work on a very small budget. I mixed it with my computer speakers on a computer with limited software capabilities, and only a few pieces of gear. We don't do this full-time, but I can tell you that it became a part-time job for me. I love doing it, so the time is really a non-issue for me in a 28-hour day!

R • Too many to mention, But for me, I was struggling with writers block unfortunately during most of Code Breaker. I was not 100%. I am feeling more confident now in my creativity, I stopped putting pressures on myself.

When did you feel that UV really defined their sound as a group?

B • I would say around the end of 2002 to most of 2003.

R • When Bruno came aboard I think that is when we meshed are different sounds into one UV sound.

H • When Bruno (Pat) wrote his first few songs with us. We found the missing link of the modern approach and production to go along with the older industrial grit we already had. We were hell bent on an extremely simple style with all the angst of the past (ex. Ministry's Twitch/ Land of Rape and Honey era). Bruno had an amazing way of modernizing it without losing the emotion, and angst.

How have remix projects, especially "Refractions: remixes in a different light" that you have worked on in the past helped you get where you are today?

B • It helped us get recognized faster, I think, because the bands that did the remixes were already established. Having a few big names on a remix CD is never a bad idea! The concept was the brainchild of our former manager, Cable. His contacts with bands throughout his years as a successful promoter made it easier to obtain help. Terrorfakt's contributions were a perfect balance of aggression from the rest of the submissions. Romell from Razed-N-Black gave a lot of advice, as well as doing an absolute floor-pounder of a remix, and mastered it for us. Simple concept, much shorter timeframe due to the original songs used were already complete, great promotion (again Cable sent mass mailings, Romell helped, and Tommy T at Dsbp played a big role), and a well-timed small tour when it was finished. Cable organized the tour, and secured three spots with Assemblage 23 on the Defiance tour. This put a name, and faces to the remix CD. We thank all the UV remixers for wanting to help us out.

In recent news, the band has been contacted by Warner Brothers to license the song "A different light" off your BLC debut CD on the upcoming "Matrix" DVD Box Set. What is your reaction to this and what do you hope to gain from this opportunity?

B • I am happy as hell! I felt a real sense of achievement with that deal! Thanks to Tim (Relic) for the contact to make it happen! He is very good at getting information out on the web. He did some investigating online and was tenacious on getting UV recognized.

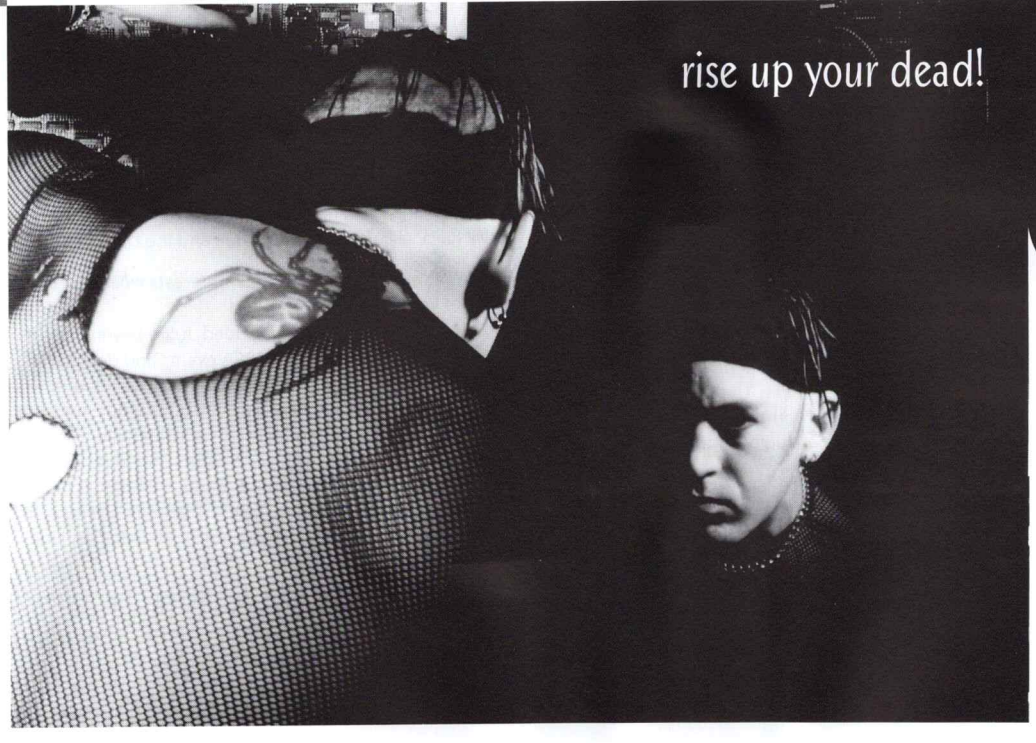
How has the Ohio scene been reacted to your debut release?

H • The scene is small but loyal. They all have supported us 100%. There are a lot of bands here in Cleveland that bust their ass to get somewhere. State of Being, Filament 38, and Furnace St. are just a few, but these guys are some of the most hard-working, driven people I know. Most of the Cleveland scene doesn't turn out at shows anymore. Some of the venues won't book bands of their respective music type (in this case, electro-industrial, industrial-rock, etc). Promoters are losing patience (and money).. It's sad, but an honest observation. Everyone is waiting for someone else to make it better. Some are still trying. Local publications are of very little support. Most of the people are true, die-hard music-lovers just wanting a place to go fit in and have fun. That's all we can ask for right now. I don't know how other cities are doing but this one is waiting for a resurgence.

BY JULIE JOHNSON

UV

Recently signed to BLC Productions, UV has just released their debut album "Codebreaker" which is their label debut. Already, UV has been climbing the industrial charts and currently is at number 7 on the Metroplis Records mail order top 10 list. In late September, UV also played live with Icon Of Coil. An exciting opportunity not only to share the stage with the legendary band, but also an opportunity to display UV's own unique skills of creating mind-blowing songs with a creative wide spectrum of sounds...and to ultimately fortify the fact that UV is a band with a very promising future. We recently were able to talk to all three members of UV: Relic, Bruno and Heretek.



MONO CHROME collapsing systems

Mono Chrome is a brand new project from members of Cut.rate.box and Claire Voyant. After two years in the making the band has released "Collapse And Sever" on on Cryonica Records in Europe and Metropolis Records in the USA. With these two members and their backgrounds, Mono Chrome has a danceable and dark electronic sound with Victoria Lloyd's vocals adding an extra flare to their sharp layers of sounds.

How did the two of you decide to do this project?

V • We were actually introduced by our mutual (then) manager Colin Gibbens, when Claire Voyant was compiling the, "Time Again" Remix album. I was really impressed with their remix of Mercy, it still is one of my favorite remixes ever, and was thrilled when cut.rate.box asked me to do some vocals on a track on a track for their album," Dataseed" So, after discussing it for a while, we decided to form a band.

How is it working together, and sharing ideas that helped you go into the direction for this album?

V • Well, we are able to be a band thanks to the Internet. We are able to upload and download tracks and really work back and forth so much easier due to the fact we both work entirely on the computer, have home studios, ample server space, and AIM. It's challenging to work remotely still though. We aren't able to bounce ideas off each other before spending a fair amount of time on and idea, and sometimes it's drilled into your head once you've recorded it, made an mp3, and uploaded it. But really, we live on opposite sides of the country and are able to work on music together, so I'm not complaining. Clint works really quickly and is a tremendous spark for me creatively because of this. We both have a pretty impulsive creative pattern and this allows us a unique and "immediate" working relationship. He would send me an mp3 of an idea for CaS, and within minutes I'd be looping it and creating vocals, making mp3s, and getting feedback from him. That is my favorite part of the process. I think we'd both like to spend a little more time actually in the same studio for the next album. We'll see.

How did your signing with Metropolis- Records come about, as "Collapse and Sever" is your debut release with them? What do you think impressed them about your music?

V • We had played Metropolis our material and discussed Mono Chrome in general a few times from our beginning stages through our finished product. Once they heard it they heard the final master, they definitely wanted to release it, much to our delight.

In which ways does Mono Chrome cross boundaries within the electronic genres?

V • I think it's because we don't adhere to a "formula". We may create with the intention of making something danceable or a good tempo range, but we always throw in some sort of unique element due to our mutual varied tastes and ideas. Sometimes it's a trip hop-esque drum loop; sometimes it's haunting strings, you never know (smiles).

Since both of you already have established musical projects, how often are you planning on working on Mono Chrome material and promoting it?

V • Well we plan on working on it a lot. I don't see Mono Chrome as a side project. It's a band for us and an endeavor we hope will continue and will continue to grow. We'll be hopefully playing a lot live over the next year and hope to hit the major European Festivals next year.

How is it like having female fronting an EBM project, and how do you go beyond the norm with this?

V • I think it has positives and negatives, although wait a minute, I' m always in a female fronted band! But seriously, in the EBM/Industrial scene I think there is a fairly large percentage of club goers/listeners that don't particularly like the "female vocalist". I think there is a stereotype that, "girls sing for goth bands and can't be powerful" kind of thing going on. Of course that is being obliterated as we speak with powerful female acts emerging and getting a lot of notice. I think the strength we have in Mono Chrome is a powerfully slick style. I don't want people to listen to Mono Chrome and the first thing they say is "oh female vocals" I want them to get the entire experience.

Are there any other female-fronted EBM artists that you look up to as you make your music?

V • I've been enjoying the work of female fronted artists like Pzycho Bitch, Seize, Backlash and Swarf. I try not to let other artists in the scene influence me vocally, because I want to retain whatever might be unique about my style.

Have any of your tracks on several compilations brought you any attention?

V • It may be too soon for us to tell. I know they have helped get our name out there, and have resulted in some airplay and interest. But I think we'll find out how much of an impact they may have had in getting us some name recognition.

What are you most looking forward too as your CD comes out on August 10th, 2004?

V • We're in the planning stages of a special edition EP for the DJ community of Remixes by bands like KIEW, Negative Format, an MC Remixed track, and possibly a few more artists. We realized with the help of Eric at Public Propaganda that it's wise for us to consider the different dance markets in Europe. I think that the range of mixes we will have will be suited for Europe and the US.

What are some of your other interests when you are not working on music?

V • Well, I'm pretty handicapped at life beyond creating music. I volunteer for a few SPCA events and do what I can to support keeping the unwanted pet population down. I do have a pretty bad girlie retail habit... attempt some pretty poor digital art and web design from time to time and I'm collecting vintage/ post war diaries. I've developed an extreme passion for Italian and American designer modern and retro-modern furniture over the last 4 or 5 years. Other than that, I'm a dinner, movies, music, and reading kind of girl. The usual (laughs).

BY JULIE JOHNSON

Having recently entered the music business, in your opinion, is it a perfect world to express yourself or a dangerous pool full of sharks?

A • We're glad, that we have the possibility of doing things how we want them to be done. Until now we have had only positive experiences with the music business. We won't say, that this kind of business is a world full of sharks, because if we had this opinion we would never have searched for a label as a business partner, but we have done this step forward and we're glad about it. Instead of a shark-world it is a great fun for us to communicate with other artists of this particular scene and we have the feeling of belonging to a great family.

A quick view on your bio shows that some of you are close to the fourty. Is it the age of the wisdom in music or maybe a missed chance for being there too late?

A • (Laughs) Well, there are always two sides of a story... maybe wisdom would hit the point... but on the other hand we didn't have the possibility of doing anything together earlier. We might be older than other artists, but look at the great ones... there always has to be the point of beginning.. why not now for us? Mick Jagger for example is one who's much older than we are... and he's still doing his thing... and still's on top, isn't he?

Fair enough. Does that mean that this first album is not a collection of first rough works like would be the case with early beginners?

A • Our older stuff was mostly instrumental stuff, and no one would release a whole record just consisting of sounds these days. We had to do something different to get into this business, that's why you can't see "Open your eyes" as a collection of first works. It took us some time to realize what we wanted to be in. Our debut is a reflection of our work during the last 1,5 years... that's what we want to represent, that's what we really are.

What is your reaction when you are described as a mix of Iris, Mesh, Camouflage, Depeche Mode? Tired or honoured?

A • Tired, no not at all... (laughs)! It's difficult to define oneself when you're a newcomer, your ambitions are different, but it is an honour being related to those who made it already, those who also had begun as newcomers... comparisons don't have to be anything bad... they also could be flattering...but on the other hand we just want to be us... Absorber should be seen as itself, we're doing stuff, we enjoy... and we want to share this with our listeners... they should like us for what we are doing and not for what they relate to us... we don't want to be Mesh the second... we can't even... Mesh've got their own roots and style...you know what I mean? And that's what our listeners are always saying: you've got your own style... why shouldn't we believe in it? (Laughs)

When you write in your press release, "where is the innovation?" We can all agree that it's certainly the most asked question these days, do you think that everything has already been done or that the innovation is rare but still present sometimes?

A • Innovation... what could it be? We think everything has been done already... but the question is: how could you create a mixture of existing things and sounding different from others... We always hold to the 80s - it was the most creative period musically, what we want is to keep this spirit alive and work hard on it...

Electronic pop music is more old 80s nostalgia or the future of pop music?

A • The 80s were the most significant period for all kinds of electronic music. These are the roots... Why do you think the most remixes during the 90s were ones of the 80s? And this tradition is still kept alive... even Marilyn Manson covered Soft Cell... on the one hand the 80s are a kind of memory of better days... but musically it's just because music in that time was the best we ever had. We just try to keep these memories, this spirit and tradition alive. And we think that this would also work for the future.

Is the live show, an inevitable way to express your music or your most hated fear?

A • Well, some of us already had live-experiences... this feeling isn't new, but we hadn't try it together until now. On 24.09. it will be our first gig together at a great event in Hamburg, we know that it won't be easy to present Absorber live, but we made our way until now, and we won't give up to keep going... and if we wouldn't believe in us, we wouldn't go onto the stage, right? We hope that nothing will go wrong and that we will convince our audience by being just ourselves.

How do you see your future through your eyes?

A • In Pandailectric we have found a great working team who supports us with every breath, shouldn't that work? We would say it will... Our next album is being created mentally already and we can tell you a secret: our next thing will be supported by a woman's background vocals, you're the first one who knows it (laughs). We always believed in ourselves, even when we hit the point, when we thought there's no way out... but that kept us strong and we always tried to go further... we would say that's what promises a successful future for Absorber.

BY CEDRIC WATTERGNIAUX

Before Absorber there was Trittschall, a project dedicated to danceable electro sounds. In 2002 the two members Michael and Dirk decided to change the name into Absorber and focus of poppier sounds. In spring 2004 the new singer Kai, who already rocked numerous stages with several projects, joined the band. That's in a nutshell how Absorber started out. Since then, they have been working on their debut album "The Fall" at their studio in Schwerte - Westfalen, Germany. The work was worth it as "The Fall", which has now been released, offers danceable, very melodic, simply cool pop. We popped in for a chat.

HUNGRY LUCY

killing a king never sounded so beautiful

Hungry Lucy presents us with their forthcoming album "To Kill A King," in which they take us on a dark trip-hop journey hovering between melodic low-tempo electronics and ghostly emotional female vocals. The mysterious depth and subtle innocence of Christa Belle's sombre lyrics give a certain gothic twist to the modern electronic compositions. Hungry Lucy consists of Christa Belle's ghostly emotional vocals and War-n Harrison's dark yet lush orchestrations. Although comparisons have been made with bands such as Portishead, Switchblade Symphony, Bel Canto, Dead Can Dance, etc. the strong identity of Hungry Lucy demands that they stand out as a quite unique act.

What sets Hungry Lucy apart from all the other bands in the scene?

CB • I think because we don't define ourselves into one "scene" that we can reach more people. We don't like being categorized by one word like "Goth", "Pop", Darkwave" and the like. I know we will be described as something, after all people need some point of reference. You can call us whatever you like. That's part of the beauty of it all. So many people can interpret songs, styles of music and words however they like.

How did you go about writing songs for this album?

CB • We have varied over the years since we've been writing together. It used to be that I would write lyrics and a melody and then War-N would write music around that. Now, especially with "To Kill a King", we wrote a lot together at the keyboard. I printed out some lyrics I had and we went with the ones we were both moved by most. I had a lot of musical input this time around and War-N had a lot of lyrical input. Since I wrote from such a raw place this time, I needed help making it song-worthy. War-N also came up with a lot of the harmonies and transitional vocals. I must say I like writing as a team much better than writing part by part and putting it together later. There's one song on TKAK called "A Lifetime Remains" which is a nice, mellow instrumental. That came to be when we were at my parent's house in Kentucky playing on my Mom's electric piano. War-N started playing some chords and I started playing a melody. We just sat and ran through it for a while and realized..."we can't record this!". After some thought we realized that we could call ourselves in Ohio and leave a voice mail! We did. It was brilliant. I'm so glad we didn't just say "oh, we can remember it" because one seldom does! Then you're like "shit. I lost it!". "A Lifetime Remains" is one of my favourite tracks on the album, too.

This album offers some impressive music that is very deep, could you talk about everything from writing it, meanings, to the challenges of recording it?

CB • It came from a raw, painful place. It mostly revolves around a relationship and the three year time period in which it took place. It was not a good relationship, obviously, so I had a lot of pain and bad memories to work through. I began writing about this over the last couple of years. There were some songs that were just too descriptive, too raw and too painful to put out there. I know people like to hear sad stories, but some of these were just depressing. Most of the songs are an accurate depiction of events. I didn't want to just write a bunch of songs that say "I hate you and you're a real bastard". Instead I wrote about the complexities that my relationship had and the effects it had on me, and my family. There were times where I would delude myself into thinking I was happy, times when I could see the good in the other person briefly and times that I just wanted to die. I surrendered my power, my will and my everything for one person. I felt so stupid within these three years for staying so long and losing my living time. I also wrote about finding my true self and discovering my strength. After all, some good had to come out of all this! I had to write about it to get the boulder in my heart to roll away. Slowly, it has. When it came time to record the vocals, some songs were very hard to get through. When we recorded "Good Girl" I broke down crying. I tried to keep going, but it all just came flooding back. I had to take a moment before we could continue. I record in our closet, mostly in the dark, and I remember sitting down in the corner and just letting it out for a minute. On the upside, I recall feeling more power in my voice when recording "You Are" and "To Kill a King". After that, I wanted to sing out all the time! I'm so glad I decided to let it all out, even with reliving some of the pain.

Was "Good Girl" also the hardest song to write?

CB • For me, the song "Rainfall" was the most difficult to write, record and sing. I can never put my finger on why it was so hard for me. Perhaps it's because it was about an unexpected person, that I will always love, and to think that I couldn't reach them made me upset. I couldn't get the words to sound the way I felt. But, with War-N's help, multiple recordings and some time to live with it, I think it turned out pretty representative of how I feel.

What kind of recording environment do you have?

WH. We have a fairly modest project studio that we use for writing and recording. The basis of it is a Korg Triton LE and Access Virus B with some older EMU Proteus models, Roland Alpha Juno, Yamaha DX stuff. We use a combo of Cakewalk Sonar on PC and Pro Tools on a Mac for recording/sequencing ... whatever's close at hand. I must admit that I love the idea of virtual instruments and being able to create a full production on a laptop. In the end, though, they're all just tools to facilitate the result. If I have to hang upside down from a tree recording the lesser known chirps of the dormant tree frog on a Tuesday afternoon ... that's what I'll do! Specific virtual instruments used on the latest disc were Steinberg/Wizoo Virtual Guitarist, which provides 90% of the guitar parts on the album. It takes a little finessing to get convincing results, but I think it's pretty damned impressive. We also used Zero-G's Vocaloid on "A Lifetime Remains". This is another amazing piece of software that I'll need a spare couple of months to fully explore!

You will also take this record on the road I presume?

CB • We are currently working on preparing for our live shows. We plan some "half-n-half" shows this Fall that will be some new songs and some older songs. We plan to tour again in the Spring and those shows will be totally new with a bit of the older stuff mingled in ... maybe even a few new versions of old fav's. We are always writing, planning and working on how to get our music heard more and more. I certainly plan on writing as much as I can, and I don't plan to stop anytime soon!

WH. Our live band at the moment consists of just the two of us. We hope to expand the live line-up soon as time and finances allow. Christa, of course, sings and I play keys and some back-up vocals. We also use video projections during our live set to add to the experience. We created a synchronized video backing for each song that draws on the mood of the song. Originally we added the video to help compensate for lack of live band members, but it has become something of a feature. We get constant comments on how much people enjoy the videos. We hope use these as the basis for a DVD release sometime in the future.

BY JOHN SEPULVEDA

the swiss league of electrodevilmetalmen MXD

Switzerland sends out her industrial metal sons under the name of MXD! Consisting of three machine men and a guitarist who founded the band in the mid 90's out of the ashes of bands like Difficult To Cure, the band's first effort was "Electrolab Inc" ('98), followed by "Doping The Beat" in 2000. Both releases were a style exercise for the band. Now back with their 3rd,"Musicogenic" is out on the streets. An album that will for many open the gates to industrial metal. A talk.

Why did it take that long to release this new album?

M • "Musicogenic" was released in October 2002 in Switzerland but the agency which was supposed to manage and help us showed its inability to do this job with an incredible lazy attitude, but miracle of love, Mika our new manager solved all these problems. He found lots of deals, gigs, human possibilities in a concrete way, 'cause he's not in the business... He's a music lover and real friend, for me, the fifth member of MXD you can say. The sixth would be Joel our sound engineer and the seventh a little toxic bugger... I forgot the name...

Your music holds heavy guitar riffs reminding me of Young Gods and electronic structures, which are sometimes close to Junkie XL. What does it say about your musical roots?

M • JXL and the Young Gods are people we like but I think we're most influenced by all the good music in every style. We listened for thirty years, and guess what, we're a pathetic thirty year old acid cyber metal band of the world through the universe of our fantastic selfishness... In my opinion, MXD sounds like the best oppositions, Pantera vs Crystal Method, Faith No More vs Propellerheads, Aphex Twin vs Queens Of The Stone Age, Rage Against The Machine vs Jean-Michel Jarre in an Isabelle Adjani Atari Teenage Riot mix. That's what I like, but I know that the others of the band prefer Céline Dion, Benni Benassi and Kim Clijsteers. After that, try to imagine how we're composing... but as strange as it really is, we jam together with machines, guitars, voice, yeah sampler junkies, it's possible, MXD-just do it! Regarding Junkie XL... I met him as a radio journalist in Eindhoven during this big metal festival. I was so surprised that heavy metal freaks banged on Jxl... but on stage I recognized the rough boy from Urban Dance Squad. It was a great show. But what is Jxl nowadays? An Elvis reanimator?

What will you keep in mind about the writing and recording of this album?

M • It was the period of 'Schnitzel paniert', you know... We sometimes have stupid things that we shout to each other like ancient knights did. Schnitzel paniert ended this "Doping The Beat" time and after we had kaka mou kaka moussaka and then Schmikoooooo and now bab! Musically talking I would keep the idea of cool emergency...

A few tracks caught my attention, but the song "Le pire" is probably the most surprising one for the weird lyrics. What is this song all about and what did you try to compose here from a pure musical point of view?

M • It's total improvisation in the beginning... dub and trance, well I don't care motherfuckers... after six or six and six and sixty six beers, I began to speak in French on this obsessional stuff, and I found the main idea... all I don't want to be. It's vomit French crazy poetry for the yuppies. Just imagine a Side-Line journalist working for Wall Street... but it's not the case, is it?

Another attention grabber is the last cut entitled "Pump", which sounds like a parody and/or personal interpretation of techno/house music... Although it's a really great track. What were the ideas behind the concept of this song?

M • The worst wonderful track of the album... Pump? (Laughs) For me that's the only boom boom track on "Musicogenic"! Basically it was a song created by the Swiss emperor of house, Mister Mike Dj on Couleur 3, the famous Swiss radio house parties. He's Mister Mike, put your hands up in the air!

You finally signed on a French label. How did this come about and what do you expect of the company?

M • We like France... I wanted to play in France all my life. Yes, that's great and unexpected, a new chance for "Musicogenic" in France, heeeehaaaaa, that's the Mika marvellous job, this guy does care a lot. We were a little bit depressed after the Swiss non-success process of "Musicogenic". Concerning our new French label I think they're really good working.

The Swiss scene has been always like a small underground area! What are your personal experiences about it and what about contacts with some of your compatriots?

M • Personally I work for Couleur 3, the Swiss national radio you can listen to on www.couleur.ch. I have a slot on there, specialized in metal prospects on Sundays between 22h and 24h. So lots of musicians are people that I meet regularly. I think the Swiss music scene has never been so tough and talent in all styles.

I imagine you guys on stage as a powerful band! What have been your experiences on stage for so far and what may we expect from MXD-live for the coming months?

M • We are a rock'n'roll band on stage... imagine a long hair guy banging on his laptop? A geek on his guitar, a spiritual independent blond guy with filthy machines, a barking old punk goth-metal dog for a singer... We're gonna tour in Switzerland and France, and I hope to be in the Benelux very soon.

I think you already did an amazing number of concerts, playing with some real big names so what did you learn out of these shows and are there some bands which did really impress you?

M • We have never watched bands before playing... but they always come in backstage to meet us cause they know we have drugs... but that's only a bad 'cliché' bout MXD (grins).

MXD in the future... what will it be and sounds like?

M • Rock'n'beats! Electrometal! MXD is frustrated so watch out, the new MXD's material will be released in spring 2005. But for now enjoy "Musicogenic" and contact us if you are a blond girl with big boobs who wants to play in a hardcore muddy oil video!

BY STÉPHANE FROIDCOEUR

DITHER dth xxx...

The French solo-project Dither is a source of productivity and discipline, releasing one new album every year. While we were still under the influence of the "Summit"-cd, Dither already strikes back with the more experimental "Amek"-one. Looking back to the interview that we previously had with this composer, we decided to try to go a bit deeper into the façade of this composer. And once again, Dither appears to us like a ghost... hiding himself behind sobriety and modesty!

Your fifth full length is a fact. What is the "Amek" album all about?

D • My concept is to have no concept! I just want to focus and work on the sound dimension and exploration, and of course try to make something new on each of my new tracks. My themes are only my sounds. In my life I am interested by many things, for example the Russian movies especially those from Tarkovsky and Isenstein... I love photography by Witkin, Serrano.... and I also enjoy a lot Ultimate Fighting and Formula 1.

I think I remember you said in a previous interview that your music is often influenced by the gear you're working on! How did it happen for "Amek"?

D • True! I am really influenced by the tools I use. They make me work in ways I've never expected before. In my opinion the electronic music is based on research and advanced technologies, and so many bands use the same sounds over the time, but I think if you always do the same tracks with the same sounds, with the same mood, you miss everything of electronic music. Most of the time I try to make my own sounds. I use very few samples because it's not my stuff. And I also try to use different softwares, some are found on the net! From now I only work with my p.c. I have sold my old sampler, effects, and synth, I have only kept my little micro-modular. My studio actually looks quite simple: a table with three PC's, a digital desk, and a good pair of monitors.

Except the possible evolution in the equipment you used, what kind of album did you have in mind when starting on "Amek"?

D • None, I have always tried to have no precise direction in my mind when I start a track, cause I never expect what will be the result. The only thing I try to concentrate on is to make interesting new sounds with new and moving dimensions.

I personally experienced "Amek" as much more into experimental stuff, into decomposed rhythms and structures...

D • I guess it's a normal evolution when you progress in you're work. I'm just trying to make something new every time. I like to have different colors on each album.

Once again there's no tracklist, so how do you name these tracks for yourself? How do you know what track people are talking about?

D • When I work, I give number to my tracks on the format "dth xxx", but on the cds, I don't want to have them. I think that giving names to instrumental tracks doesn't make any sense for me... But usually when I read play-lists with Dither songs, people always say "track 3","track 5"...

Speaking of track 5, this piece is a remarkable entity of dark, mysterious moods and built up with tons of effects! What went through your mind?!

D • When I wrote this one I wasn't thinking about something special, I was only concentrating on the sound design and the rhythmic architecture of the overall structure, and indeed the result is quite dark and enigmatic, I don't know why but many people love this track!

10 must be your favorite number, I clearly see the trend of 10-tracks per album on several of your previous releases. Is it just a coincidence or a deliberate choice? Why?

D • Indeed it's a deliberate choice, ten tracks is pretty cool! That's the best you can do for an album! Bands who put nine or eleven are losers (laughs)! I have tried to make this track more in the mood of my older works but I wanted to explore the style of my old compositions with the gear I use today.

I've been desperately in search of the Dither-webpage... and it seems there's none! How come, especially for a project that has now released its fifth album?

D • Good news then because now there is one! I have not enough time to even make music, let alone to work on a website. But now M-tronic have made one you can visit at: http://dither.free.fr In my point of view internet is a wonderful tool. I use it to work with people far away from me and it is truly great! If some people use it in a wrong way, I don't care.

Your album has been already released by M-Tronic! You seem to feel comfortable here, but tell us a bit more about the eventual contacts with your label mates and in, which way can speak about a label 'family' here?

D • I have a very good relationship with M-Tronic and there is a really fine musical convergence between the artists, like CH.District, Displacer, Servovalve, Duuster... Sometimes we play together at concerts or we remix each other. I think there is a great spirit in this label.

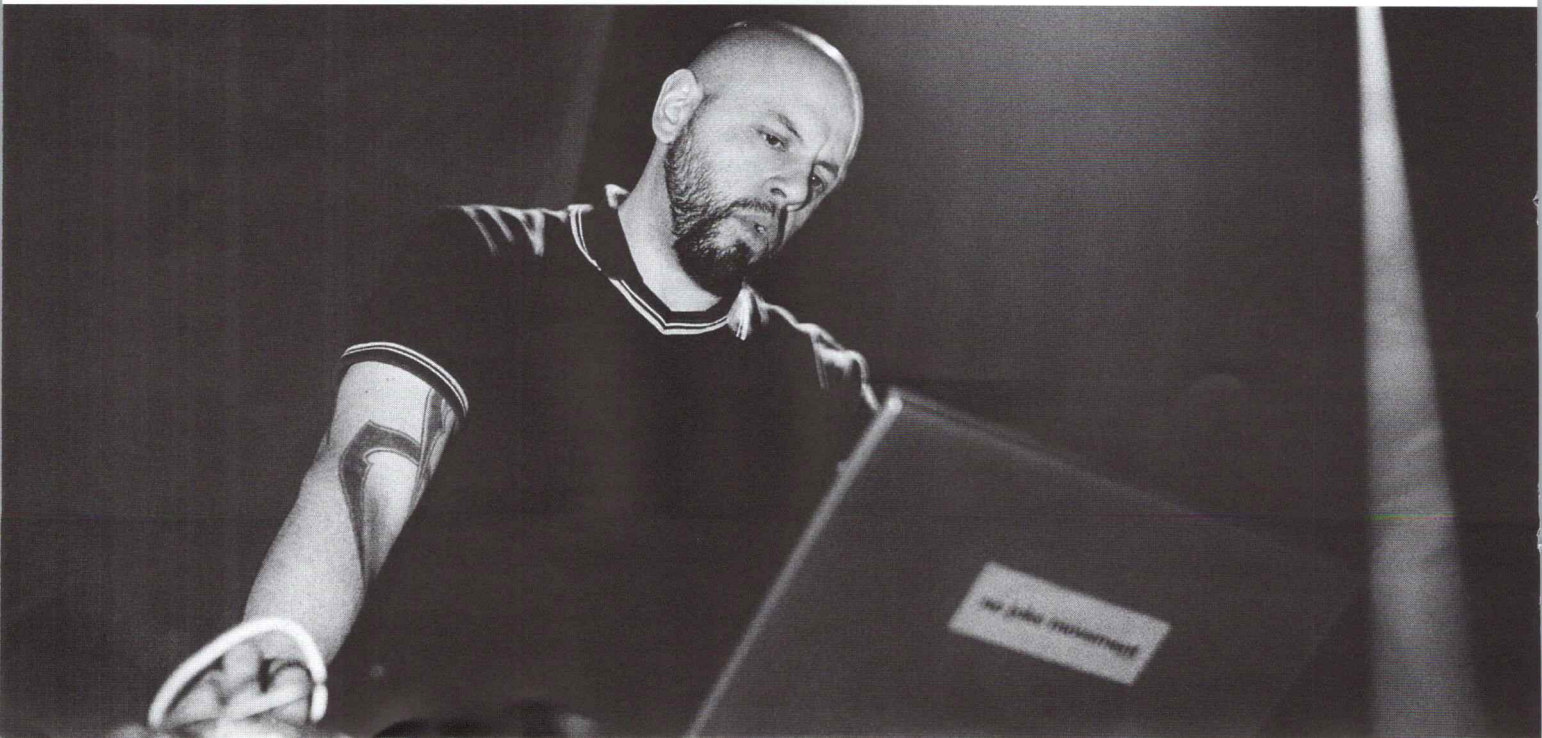
What about your side-project Dirge? Is there anything planned for the coming months?

D • Yes, we have just made a brand new record entitled "... and shall the sky descend". It was released last month. We have some live shows scheduled like the one in "La Locomotive" in Paris on the 3rd of November. Dither and Dirge are really two separated projects for me. They have nothing in common. It is also a totally different work, in one I play guitar and sing, and in the other I look for sound research and explore new ways of composition. Even if they are completely different, they both represent a part of my personality.

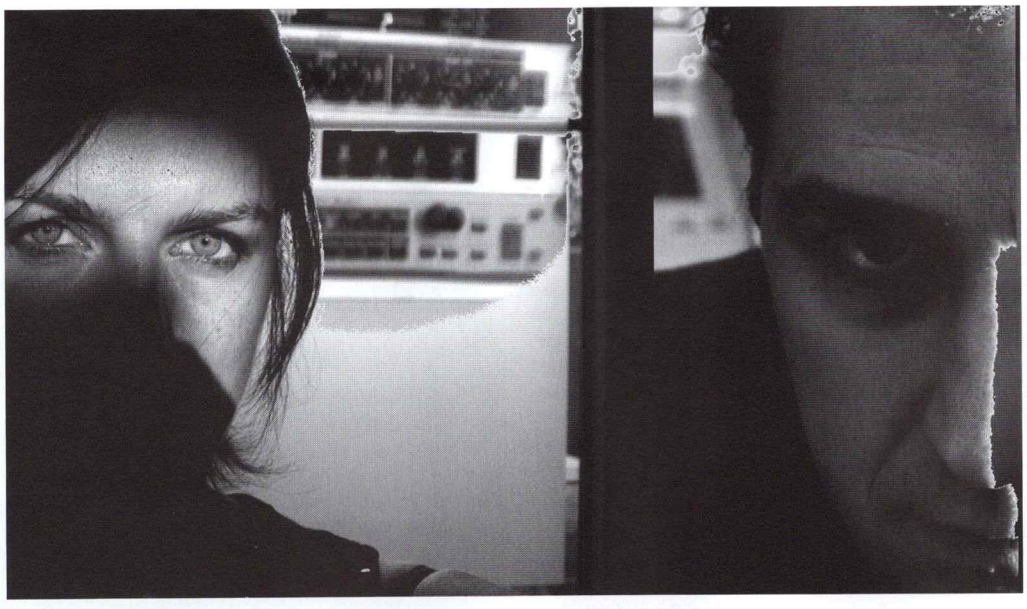
What about future live-shows and other possible plans/projects?

D • As "Amek" is just out now, I am working on my next live performances. The next one is in Paris (Le Triptyque) on the 29th of October. I will be playing with Pan Sonic. I am also working on remixes for Knut, CH.District and Displacer. A vinyl should also be released on M-tronic and I will start working on a new album as I like the idea to release one album per year ...

BY STÉPHANE FROIDCOEUR



the mind that rocks the electronic cradle MONOLITH



Monolith, the solo-project of Belgian electronic music veteran and producer Eric van Wonterghem (ex-Klinik and member of Sonar and Insekt) started up in 1997, has just released its 5th album "15seconds" on Psycho Dynamics. On this release Monolith goes further with his experimental sound which is a mixture from industrial, ambient and ebm sounds created with the latest technologies and mixed with lots of outboard analog gear. The band also welcomes a new member aboard, namely Eric's wife Hilde Ivens, yes the sister of Dirk Ivens, who adds live vocals as well as live video-mixing. With several live shows to follow in Manchester, Leipzig, Brussels, Rotterdam and Krefeld, we quickly took the chance to pay the master a visit.

After the Insekt live album "Ohrwürmer", the new Monolith is now also released via Psycho Dynamics, how does it feel to have your solo project under your very own wings now, and that of your wife Hilde Ivens as well...?

E • I think most bands now this days starts their own label ...not to be a label manager, but just to be able to release their music the way they want. It's just what I do now these days, making music, producing, (re)mixing and performing... and to keep doing this I just have to make CDs to promote myself (and hopefully to make some listeners happy). In a time with internet home-studios etc. you can easily control it all, it takes a lot of time but its worth doing ...and talking about Hilde, I think she's the only person who knows me and my music best. We can discuss about monolith every time we want and it's nice to travel and perform together...

Regarding this, did Hilde ever think that she'd be part of a musical project or has she been in the past? And how does she feel being in it right now?

E • Not really, but never say never .... I was bored to be alone on stage, I felt more like a dj more than a live performer. So I asked Hilde if she would control the video-mixer and effects and now she has also added some vocals. She likes it very much and although it's quite new for her, she loves doing it! She is not a graphic designer or so, graphics were made by different persons all over the different albums, but as a photographer she did some nice pics for Insekt, Monolith and others...

What special impact does a matrimonial status have on your writing? Do women interfere or what, what is your point of view on this?

E • Well, I can make songs now with an intro, verse and chorus, because there is a vocal part, if it would be a man or a woman that is no difference. Hilde also does not interfere at all, the music is totally my thing, I ask her opinion now and then, but what I do in the end, well, I do what I want to do (laughs)!

Being your 5th album to date, where do you see "15 seconds" making the difference with the other releases?

E • The ritual influences are gone in this album, except on the limited bonus CD because I still had a nice mix there on my shelf. I definitely worked much more on the sound, producing and mixing than I did on the other albums. I have always tried to make an album that is completely playable. I mean by this that there is enough going on, enough variation in the music while still fitting in the Monolith concept, and I think we have succeeded really good on this album. The sound on "15 seconds" is sometimes less complex and more direct ... I also did much more real time playing synths, effects and mixing to make the sounds more alive.

And the story behind it is...?

E • "15 seconds" is about the fact that some day it all stops! The end of the world, death, fear and people thinking they can escape. With a 'story' like this, the sound of the album is already in my mind...

Having said this, you've never tried to follow a trend, did it ever cross your mind to start a new project knowing damn well that it could have resulted in instant success or do you consider yourself not to be a hit-machine but rather a meticulous musician?

E • Well, I see Monolith now as a completed concept, I think we made an own sound now, it is not the easiest way because if I would make pure body, techno, industrial or ambient you directly would be able to fit it in somewhere, but my personality tells me not to and that's why it's a slow process to grow. I like what I do and I am really happy that I can do all these projects such as Sonar, Insekt and Monolith. Or that I can be working with a lot of other bands producing them or mixing them. You know, trends never last long and I like to be different rather than following the mass.

As you just touched, this album will be released with an extra limited bonus disc, something that you have spoken about in the past but that never was realised, why did it happen this time?

E • Indeed! This was the time to make an extra disc, especially for the fans. But they have to be quick because I think we will make them limited to only around 300 pieces... You can expect 6 extra tracks on the bonus disc, 1 harder sounding remix from "Shot!" from the new album, and the rest are unreleased tracks, from hard beats to ritual sounds. To order your copy, got to http://shop.alfa-matrix.com where you can get it directly.

By the way, you quit the ProDam-mastering studio a while back, right? Why exactly? You had a good name so why did you decide to stop it?

E • Yes I quit it and the reason why is quite simple: I was 7 days a week inside my studio! That might sound great but after 5 years I really had enough. Imagine working on 20 different CD productions at the same time, all with deadlines, different needs and so on... Yes, I tried to find a partner but I never found the right companion for the studio so it became too much for me. Honestly, I really missed making music for myself because that stopped completely when ProDam started its activities. And making music that I like was what it was all about in the first place!

BY PATRICK FALQUE

BLANK

The story of this Italian progressive EBM-project starts as a contradiction... starting with a gothic formation and moving towards real modern and trance like electronics. Der Mate (programming) and The Maze (programming and vox) started Blank with some promising EBM-demos and finally came to trance-like electronics melted with EBM. Their debut album is a real interesting item to explore so enough reasons to plan an interview!

How do you explain the move from gothic to modern electronics since you started out as a goth band under the name of Headrops almost 10 years ago.

B • In the middle of the 90s we were much more into gothic than now. When Headrops split and we remained, we were really tired of the typical gothic sound, so our natural choice was going on making music in an electronic environment - a complete change of direction. By the way, that experience taught us much, especially about what not to do to make serious stuff. After our demos had that huge success, a few labels contacted us, mostly to talk. It seemed nobody was sure about wasting time and money with this Italian project, and we didn't want a label that wasn't 100% convinced about us. Then Artoffact came out and seemed truly interested in making Blank grow with the label. We already knew the outstanding quality of its releases and we liked all of the artists signed to them, so, it was a pleasure to join the crew.

I personally experience your music as a move and evolution from traditional EBM towards progressive and even trance EBM.

B • We've always listened to tons of different stuff in the years. From '80s dance, wave and cyber, to Staalplaat industrial and Japanoize. Our CD players saw Pankow, Kirlian Camera, the mid '90s Zoth Ommog flood, and then Hallucinogen and Tiesto... From the beginning we've always wanted to do dancefloor-oriented electro, and maybe our poor production made it sound like old-style EBM in our first demos. Since then, we think our technical skills have improved, and now we sound more - not fully - like what we want to be.

How do you look back on the writing, recording and release of your debut-album "Artificial breathing"?

B • "Artificial breathing" is a sort of diary of our first years of activity. Since 2000, we released 2 demo CDs, which we put freely available on the internet, and whose success really surprised us. Then came Yolk of Artoffact, we made a further demo especially for him, and we got signed. We started working hard in the studio, trying to do our best to have a great album done in a few months. It's been a really amazing experience, and we can say we've grown so much in a short time, also thanks to our sound engineer - the Mysterious EdM - and to Yolk, who made it possible. We had a great time.

You have reworked a few 'old' songs like "Visual Overflow", "Mutant Engine" and even "Zero". How did it happen and how do you look back on the earlier songs of Blank?

B • We love all of our songs and there were more important ones that we wanted to release on our debut album because of their meaning to us. But the production simply wasn't good enough for a proper release, and we decided to rework them in order to make them sound consistent with the other, more recent songs. Our album is composed of songs written in a three year period, but recorded in less than six months.

A few months ago you already released the "Overhead" EP. What have been the reactions to the EP and what did you think about the remixes of the title-song?

B • "Overhead" was our first release, our introduction to the real world, and we were a bit worried about what would happen. Fortunately, people seemed to like it, and we got many enthusiastic reviews. We think the choice of the remixers has been a major hit. When Yolk told us Tim Schuldt, Moonitor and Implant had to remix us, we were just shocked. We've followed Implant for years and love to death the music of Schuldt and Seb - who's a really lovely person too. All three have done a great and professional work, and their remixes absolutely kick - surely worth a listen!

You also appeared on the latest volume of "Uturn" together with Moonitor... a cool experience?

B • The "Uturn"-series is amazing and we were more than happy to be in, and to share the job with Moonitor! When we started working on "Uturn", we had just finished the recordings of our album, and we really needed a rest, so we started working more... easygoing, with no pressure at all, feeling free to explore new sounds and experiment new solutions. In the end, "Uturn" has been an excellent, pleasant way to improve and evolve towards what we want to do in our next album.

I personally think that the "Uturn"-series is an incredible source of progressive electronic music, but the releases aren't really famous here in Europe. Any reaction on this and which way do you as band feel dependent and concerned about sales?

B • Unfortunately, despite being in the age of globalization and internet, Europe doesn't pay much attention to what comes from the USA or other continents. I think it is also a matter of costs, since the market is so small that to import foreign releases is a bit risky. Larger labels like Metropolis are quite efficiently distributed, small labels as Artoffact (just to make an example) are still working hard to get deserved recognition. It's weird... I think the three "Uturn"-CDs are the most interesting I've heard in ages, and it's a shame that bands like Headscan or Massiv in Mensch have released such amazing works without being noticed that much in Europe. And, being an Italian, European band, it's a bit strange for us to have our largest fanbase in Canada while being almost unknown at home. We'd love to reach the most people we can. When people from countries like South Africa, Philippines, or Japan send us emails, it's great to know that they know and love our music, it's the best feeling we can get!

BY STÉPHANE FROIDCOEUR

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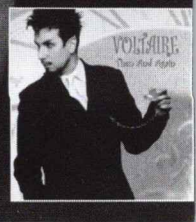
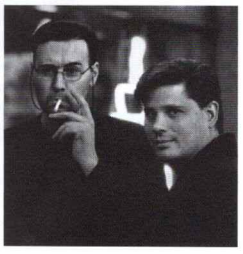
Voltaire: Then And Again

THE DEVIL TAKES A HOLIDAY

Known for his dark humor, Voltaire temporarily hangs up his horns on Then And Again, nine gorgeous songs of love lost where no one gets beheaded! Serious, heartfelt and mature, Voltaire shows his versatility as an artist.



CASUALTY PARK



From the moment I got hold of the "The replica's chair" EP in an underground (literally) recordstore in Antwerp back in 1992, I've been keeping an eye on what Casualty Park released. Early 2000 things got silent around the band, but in 2004 they reappeared on the Greek Cyberdelia Records with a brand new album "Executive Flesh". Casualty Park is the project run by singer/songwriter Martin Birke assisted by producer Aaron Kinney and basically brings intelligent electro-pop music and abstract sample-based compositions. From electro-pop to instrumental soundscapes, Casualty Park has worked with major and minor companies such as The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Frank Mark Arts, Arts Industria, The Oxygen Cable Network and now Cyberdelia Records We hailed Alaska, where Martin Birke is currently residing...

First this, when I bought "The replica's chair" back in 1992, I found the EP between the releases of Depeche Mode. Tell me were the drums really taken after the "Policy of truth" drumsounds of Depeche Mode? Also, I guess that EP must have been during your Japan era as I first thought this was a new Japan release looking at the artwork.

M • No. Aaron and I create all our own sounds, even though we are into DM, Massive Attack and Peter Gabriel. You will find some similarities though... As far as the Japan Connection, yes, I'm quite influenced by David Sylvian. Always have been, Japan's Tin Drum showed me that original pop music can be extremely exciting!

It is always said that Casualty Park came to life in 1993... 1 year after "The replica's chair"?

M • I don't acknowledge "The replica's chair", it was a very immature and poorly written demo-release, an embarrassment to me now and a learning of sorts.

You quit Frank Mark Arts in order to sign to Cyberdelia, tell me what happened and how you got to sign to this Greek label?

M • FMA is a great label, we felt that Cyberdelia could and is getting us distributed in a much bigger way. "Executive Flesh" is reaching a vaster audience in more countries and press than our past 2 releases.

You have done 3 years to complete the material, I presume there was no hurry?

M • Well, I had moved to Alaska and was recording "Executive Flesh" on my own. Aaron was tied up in California with his business, he is a professional music producer with his own company PassKey Media, so we couldn't really work together during 2000-2002. Aaron joined me at the end and polished the tracks up very well. He is simply the one of the best producers in the world.

I noticed that the lyrics are far from being happy, not that it ever was so with your songs, but this time it's very visible.

M • Well, my divorce hit me pretty hard. And by nature I'm a mysanthrope and don't like people (a dislike of humanity). Besides, there are more than enough "happy"(crappy) bands out there as it is.

The band has remained putting the biggest emphasis on piano sounds, midi guitar and selective rhythm sounds, rather sophisticated and very filmic. Any reason why you chose this path or what triggered it?

M • I love electro-based music, but keeping with somewhat traditional sounds seems to be the best way to try to relate to an audience, I think. I've always written on piano/keyboards.

On "The Game" I discover a sample that is repeated twice in the first seconds from Recoil's "Faithhealer", right?

M • Hmm..., no samples from "Faith Healer", but close. I really like Alan's Recoil project, he has always inspired me! He wrote me a very nice letter praising Casualty Park a few years back, I'll always love'm for that! Alan Wilder is simply one of the important artists on this Earth.

In the past Casualty Park has repeatedly said that the US was a difficult battle in order to find recognition. Did your performance at the New York International Music Festival in Las Vegas change anything?

M • The USA loves mediocre guitar-bands, nothing good has ever come from the States - except Casualty Park of course (laughs)! Aaron and I have performed all around California but found it less than inspiring - I don't think the people really understood our sound. The International Music Fest was a pathetic arena of novice bands - we won't be doing that again! American music trends are simply the worst.

Also please give us a view in what is currently played on your CD-player?

M • Aaron and I are currently into Massive Attack's "100 Window", those guys are really making something good! We hope to have Robert Del Naja do a vocal track for us someday.

Finally, what are your expectations with this release?

M • I really hope "Executive Flesh" gets heard by the right people, we're currently recording a new album that we feel is already surpassing all our past records! Really! Look for our new single "I am Legend" on our website www.casualtypark.net in October. It really is a post-modern tour-de-force!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

an anti-social industrial female composer INFRASTRUCTURE

You maybe have discovered Stacia Tucker aka Infrastructure on a sampler or one of the remixes she did for bands like Implant, Hungry Lucy, Stromkern and many more. This female artist has now just released her official debut-cd on her very own label. An act that we can only encourage and we do hope that some more other electronic women will follow her example! We asked her about the "Salt the earth"-album to introduce you in the universe of Infrastructure!

Fire In The Hole is your own label, you've set up to release this debut. How did it happen and what's the goal of this company?

I • I've always had a do-it-yourself attitude when it came to making and promoting my music. I've picked up some music business skills over the past few years as well and I just figured it was time to go for it. Fire in the Hole will likely release Infrastructure and related projects for a while, but I'm definitely keeping my ears open for the future.

Referring to your demo stuff, I think that "Salt the earth" only contains new songs. Why is it you didn't pick up some earlier songs and how do you look back on the early period of Infrastructure?

I • I made several demos when I was younger and still living at my parents' house. By the time I finally settled into my own apartment and set up my new studio it had been almost a year since I released the last demo. I had changed so much since then. The world had changed so much. I just felt it was necessary to start from scratch. I'm still proud of the older material, but this release is more mature.

I first thought that you were hailing from the UK. I thought to have recognized a kind of typical British electro sound with some vague gothic moods. Sorry about the comparison, but do you maybe feel close to any typical electro scene in the world?

I • Well, I'm not all that familiar with different scenes around the world, but I certainly feel comfortable here in the Boston scene! We really have it good around here with plenty of musicians, djs and groups like Angeldustrial and Voidstar productions putting on shows and events. I'm definitely looking forward to touring other countries someday soon, though!

I have some real difficulties trying to define your electronic music! Can you try to describe what you're composing and what about your sources of inspiration?

I • I'll take that as a compliment! It is difficult to define and that's what I'm going for! I want to make music that I've never heard before. Keep it interesting. I'm inspired and influenced by many different styles of music. I like electronic music like synth-pop, idm, and industrial. But I'm also really into hip-hop, pop, electroclash, and so on. I fall for individual bands, not the general category they may fall under. I'm a huge fan of Cevin Key and basically anything he's ever done. Skinny Puppy was one of the first darker electronic acts I was introduced to so they were a huge influence. Haujobb is fantastic, The Faint, Franz Ferdinand, DJ Shadow. The new Seabound is really good. I could go on and on! I'm picky, but I'm more likely to give something a chance if it sounds unique.

Tell us a bit more about the writing of the album?

I • Well, most of it was done alone, but I did work with Koren on the lyrics for a few tracks. We would basically just get together with an instrumental, discuss a topic we wanted to explore and take it from there!

Before this debut, you already remixed some interesting bands of the scene like Implant, Hungry Lucy and Stromkern. How did you get in touch with them and how does it feel for a demo-project to remix established groups?

I • Well, I was a big Stromkern fan, so when I heard they were going on tour a while back I pushed for a Boston date and got to open for them. The show was amazing and we had a great time. I asked if they'd like a remix and they let me have a shot at it! I got the opportunity to remix Implant and Hungry Lucy when their label approached me so of course I jumped at the chance. I was very excited to have my mixes accepted. It was cool to be able to put my spin on their tracks.

The main point that often hurts for a debut cd is the lack of production so how did you try to take care about this important item?

I • I had a couple fantastic producers help me out! Brian Redmond of Vers and Adam Jensen of Grenadier both contributed to the production of the CD. Brian also did the mastering. Both of them have a ton of experience and I knew I could count on them. My own production skills have been improving over the years as well, so it all came together nicely!

How will you try to transpose the studio work of Infrastructure on stage and what do you try to accentuate during the live shows?

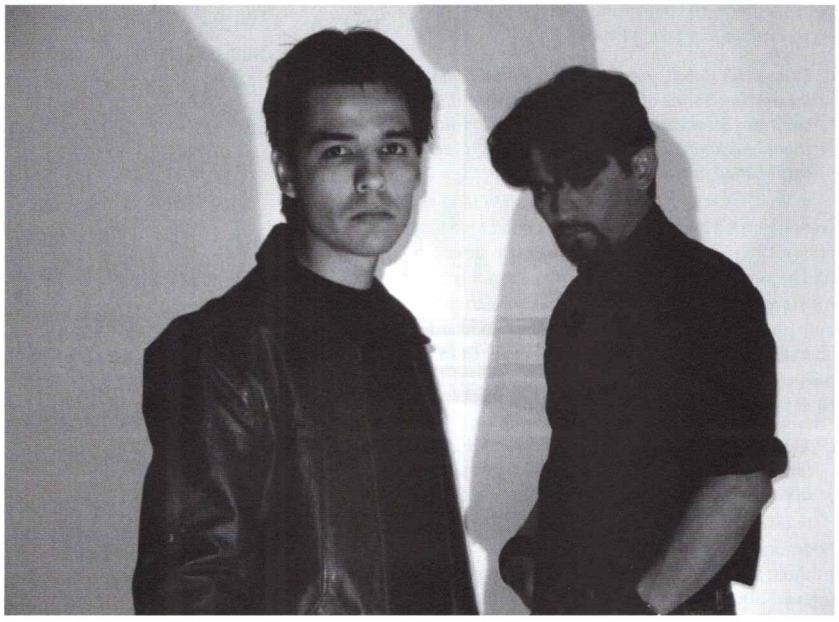
I • Sadly, my long time partner in crime for live performances just moved to the west coast. I just recently put together a new all-girl line up for live performances and we're currently gearing up to play our first show together! I absolutely love performing. It's going to be really high-energy. I'm really looking forward to getting back out there and playing all this new material.

What about side projects like your involvement in DHR and MindFIELD?

I • MindFIELD is a local synthpop project that I play live keyboards for. We're actually working on an Infrastructure/mindFIELD split which will be coming out soon, probably on Fire in the Hole. I think the DHR thing you're referring to is actually a track I did vocals for by HSM that ended up on a Digital Hardcore Records compilation. HSM was this crazy collaboration of New England area electronic musicians that has since faded away. It was really over the top! A whole lot of alcohol fueled the recording of that track! I've also been working with an amazing vocalist and songwriter named Matthew Conner. We hope to put out an album together within a year or so. And of course there will be plenty of new Infrastructure material on the way!

BY STÉPHANE FROIDCOEUR

FEKTION FEKLER two faces in one



After releasing two albums as Fektion Fekler for their first label Pendragon, one as Moksha for Artoffact and work with Mentallo & The Fixer, the brothers Robert and John Bustamante return with a brand new opus, this time released on Black Flames in Europe and Static Sky Records in the USA. The release comes as a double album holding the two faces of the band, a more dance orientated one and a softer one. It worked out splendidly! We separated Robert from his brother and started scrutinizing...

On "Take it all" I almost thought I was listening to Pink Floyd with that airplane going down. Did you pick up the idea from there?

R. Good ears. Yeah, the very ending of "Take it all" is a Pink Floyd sample. I sampled and mixed it in there. On one mix I have the whole airplane and drum roll that follows but my brother was like "take that out, it sounds like shit". I left in the airplane but took out the drum roll. John was still against using that sample, but hey, I mix all our music so I left it in. I think it came out rather cool building up to the next track.

What film sample is that "stop breathing" from? I recognize from somewhere but can't put it right...

R. It's from the movie called "The Others". I would actually get spooked in the studio while I was mixing in the sample. I would have the volume up a bit and that heavy breathing would come in, then the "stop breathing" line. I was looking all around the studio, fucking scared. The pot I was smoking probably didn't help matters. Making me all paranoid and shit.

How do you see the progression for the band compared to "Kling Klang Bedlam"?

R. KKB was a very emotional album for us, and probably the favorite album by us with the fans. It was a party every night in the studio. I was constantly drunk and high on pot. At one point I got pneumonia and was still in the studio adding vocals and mixing. My brother and I were constantly fighting, John quit several times. I really can't blame John looking back on it. He would work on a vocal track for days and then I would call him up the next day and tell him I had erased all his vocals and he needed to do them again, but this time he had to sing through a guitar pick up, crazy shit like that. It just drained us as a band. By the end of it we were like, I fucking hate your guts. "Into the Sun" is a different album all together. For one we hardly argued about the music. I guess because the sessions were stretched out over years as opposed to KKB, which was us recording non-stop for two years straight. Also, we are working with better musicians this time out. I think my engineering has also gotten better too. We're learning.

On "Generations", who is that taking the lead vocals, your brother John, sounded rather unfamiliar but excellent.

R. Yeah, that's John aka "Womb Dabbler". He did a great job on that track. If you listen to the opening verse you can hear all those vocal over dubs I was talking about. Kyle Schact does the guitar work. The best part to that track, in my opinion, is at the end when that extra bass drum comes pounding in. Drives it all the way home.

I'm myself part of a twin and I love working together with my brother though I notice that sometimes I really want to kick his head.... Do you have the same love and hate relationship within the Bustamante posse?

R. Yeah, John and I argue from time to time while in and out of the studio about Fektion Fekler. It's impossible not to. But sure, I've thrown him out of my studio from time to time. John has thrown the occasional piece of gear at me. But it has gotten better over the years. Before, John used to say things to get me really pissed off. Like recently. I showed him a new track I was working on and he said "that's the gayest track you have ever written" five years ago I would have tried to physically hurt him, but now it's just the way he expresses things, with a smart-ass comment. The other day I got really pissed because I had a lot of stuff going on with the labels and I needed John to help with some of the workload. So I go down the street and start yelling at him while he was planting some new tree in his yard. He goes inside and I follow him and we start yelling at one another about this and that. Finally I leave and start putting all his equipment out in my driveway for him to come pick up. He comes over and we talk it out. So it's gotten better. We would go at it blow for blow in the past. It was crazy. Before it was like, "Robert the reason my life is so fucked up is because the way you're mixing the goddamn hi hat". It was stupid. We're older now. We are just too lazy to fight anymore. It's gotten to the point were we just say "your a dick head" or "your the worse singer in the world, you've lost it John, you suck". That kind of crap.

Listening to Moksha or Fektion Fekler, I always feel the same vibe going through all the work: a very open and diverse approach...

R. I think "Into the Sun" is a diverse album to begin with. I hate repeating myself musically; it's unfair to the fans that by the album then realize it's the same song over and over. With "Into the Sun" you have quite a few different styles of music: Industrial, dance, EBM, instrumentals, acoustic, weird jazzy soundscapes it's a fucking free for all. In the end, we decided to release a double album. Disc one with all the harder tracks, and disc two with the softer music. I think it worked out fine.

Metropolis Records own the licensing right on your first two records until the year 2004, which is now. Will you renew this or what are your plans?

R. Actually, they no longer have rights to any of our albums. I haven't seen a royalty check from them in years. They did have an option to release "Into the Sun" but they only wanted the electro tracks, not the acoustic ones. We said we could not do that so passed on turning in an album they wanted us to release. We signed with Static Sky Records instead for the domestic release of "Into the Sun".

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

BLUE BIRDS REFUSE TO FLY

in the shades of the acropolis

Blue Birds Refuse to Fly is the personal project of Kyriakos Poursanides, keyboard player from the now defunct greek indie band Wasteland. After a first album, "Give me the wings", on Physis Records in 1998, the band now returns with a second album "Anapter_ma" to be released in late 2004 - early 2005 on Decadance Records. This time, the role of the basic singer is given to George Dedes, the leader of the Illusion Fades for more than ten years. We sat down with the birds for an interesting chitchat.

Another project from Greece, after Genetic Variation, now Blue Birds Refuse to Fly is hitting the shops. Is it a coincidence that Greece starts reacting now internationally with new bands?

KP • No, I don't think it's a matter of coincidence. It's just the fact that during the past few years, the greek bands have been operating in the underground due to hard conditions, but constantly improving their music, their sound and their aesthetics.

You have a past as keyboard player in the greek indie band Wasteland (1990-1998). Were they popular outside Greece, because the name does not ring a bell. What made you end your ties with the band in 1998, a split?

KP • Wasteland was an indie pop group, part of a scene that was sensational in Greece during their era. They had a contract with a small independent label (Pegasus records) that operated locally and had poor distribution abroad. So, they never made it out of Greece. The group ceased playing very quietly in 1998 although no official split was ever declared. The group members are still very dear friends (George Priniotakis who engineered, mixed and produced both BBRTF albums was Wasteland's lead singer)

Your first album "Give me the wings" was released on Physis Records in 1998, what did you learn from it?

KP • The response was extremely positive from both public and press. It was the match that set me on fire. The wings that were given to me after many long years of effort. During the process of recording the album, I realised the continuous hard work it takes to take something good and make it even better. Despite the difficulties that may come our way we should always keep on trying because, after all, everyone of us gets what he deserves in the end. That was the most important thing I learned from "Give Me The Wings".

On this second album the role of the basic singer is given to George Dedes (The Illusion Fades), replacing Cristina Mihalitsi and George Priniotakis from the previous album. Why this change and what attracted you in his voice?

KP • George Priniotakis was a guest vocalist in "Give Me The Wings" and he is also participating in the "Anapteroma" CD singing "Some Roads Can Take You Everywhere". The main difference is switching from the ethereal lyrical female voice of Christina Mihalitsi to the low deep male voice of George Dedes. The reason for this change is the change from the ethereal - electro and less dance atmosphere of "Give Me The Wings" to the more future pop and dance tracks of "Anapteroma". During the years between the two albums, my way of listening to music, my sound and even my feelings have changed and so did my music. The deep dark voice of my dear friend for many years, George Dedes, was the perfect guarantee for an excellent cooperation which gave birth to "Anapteroma"

The group is now moving towards electro with a more dance-oriented production now, please explain this change in sound-colour...

KP • Along with George Dedes and our producer George Priniotakis, we tried to record and mix the songs in a way that combined the pop melodies our keyboards provided with power beat and bass impact. We wanted songs that you could equally dance to in a club or listen to at home alone.

The material indeed reminds of the work by Diary Of Dreams, Diorama and related. What's your comment on this?

KP • It's an honor for me being compared to groups that I love and have been influenced from. I wish that as a music person I will always remind people of beautiful and beloved things. Let us not forget that man always shows what he loves with every possible way. It would be a lie if I said that nothing affects my work. Everything affects me, I learn from everything and adding my personal experience and touch, I try to create something nice for people to listen to. Whether I succeed or not is not for me to say.

"The end" has this funny sci-fi choir arrangements, how did that idea pop to your mind?

KP • I wanted to create a song that sounded like a soundtrack for a movie. That was the original idea. I am a soundtrack fan. I partucularly enjoy the way sound provides an image with a different perspective and dimension. I wanted to combine sampled female lyrical vocals with the depth of George Dedes's voice and all that under the roof of an overall cinema feeling. I hope I've succeeded!

BY BERNARD VAN ISACKER

AGONISED BY LOVE soul exhibitionists from poland

Agonised By Love are the Polish duo Rafal Tomaszczuk and Mariusz Gryciuk. Described as a hybrid between Diary Of Dreams, Deine Lakaien and Diorama, a first very professional sounding promo titled "Blindness" quickly found its way to several interested labels. The band that is visually covered with the aura of the famous 4AD and Projekt stable in the end chose to sign to the Belgian label Alfa Matrix. At the moment they are completing the recording sessions for their promising debut album "All of white horizons" to be released later this year. Side-Line paid the band a visit in Poland and came back with a report...

The bands exists already since 1997, but a first promo only got out in 2002, why this delay?

R • Between 1997-2002 we tried to collect all the ideas and worked on creating our own style of music. Several demo tracks got recorded in our home environment and during studio sessions after which we chose the best ones to be featured on the promo. We also tried to make our art as clear as possible to our audience and that's why it took so long to release first promo. During all that time we tried to achieve the best results of our work and our sound engineer knew about it during his task. We have spent many hours in the studio and we tried to make our sounds more effective. And no, in the studio we didn't want to listen to other bands because we did not want to compose in a similar style.

M • We try not to confine within one type of music, so that listeners can find many sounds, which are rarely used in dark independent music. We grew up with our music. It couldn't have been recorded before, the style matured with us. It all took us time. "Blindness" was created at the moment we were ready to record.

I guess that Xymox is really an influence for you guys, considering the name of the band?

R • That's true, because Clan Of Xymox is one of my favourite bands. Secondly the name of our band is connected with our lyrics and perfectly fits what is all about.

What did that first promo do for you, did you start shopping around for a record deal?

R • We placed faded versions of the compositions from "Blindness" on our web site since "Blindness" was not for sale. It was just given for free to those who wrote to us or asked for it. Thanks to it, only those people received it for whom music is very important in their lives. Several copies were sent to the Polish local zines and portals. The very positive critics gave us the strength to go on.

You have signed to Alfa Matrix, how did this happen? Alfa Matrix is a label that offers very danceable electro and industrial noise acts. How do you think you'll fit in?

R • We have sent "Blindness" to just a few independent labels. Some of them were really interested in releasing ABL album, but finally we chose Alfa Matrix. We think that Alfa Matrix perceived the passion and the truth of our emotions we put into our music.

M • To tell you the truth it is very difficult for us to match in any kind of concrete style. We would always be too electro for gothic music or too rocky for strictly electro band. It is very good that we weren't isolated at the very beginning.

"All of white horizons" is a release that for sure will please fans of bands like Deine Lakaien, Diorama and related. What bands do you feel close to?

R • I am a real fan of all kinds of electro music whether it is dark electro, dark wave, synth pop, future pop or new romantic. Mariusz used to listen to quite different music, especially new romantic, that's why I think that by linking our music fascinations the "Agonised By Love" style has taken its origin. We've never tried to sound like Deine Lakaien, Diary Of Dreams or Diorama, it came naturally. Even though I have to confess that those bands are the best bands I know, so maybe some of their music influence did get through to ours (laughs).

I was especially struck by the 4th track on the advance release I listened to. It clearly shows what the band is about: very subtle compositions and a voice that is very emotional. Your comment?

R • By music and sounds we try to express our emotions and feelings, that are very deep, sometimes subtle and sensitive and sometimes aggressive and strong. We are soul exhibitionists (smiles). My lyrics are very personal and express my concerns and my concept of love. That's why I want my singing style to be so natural and express the value of the lyrics.

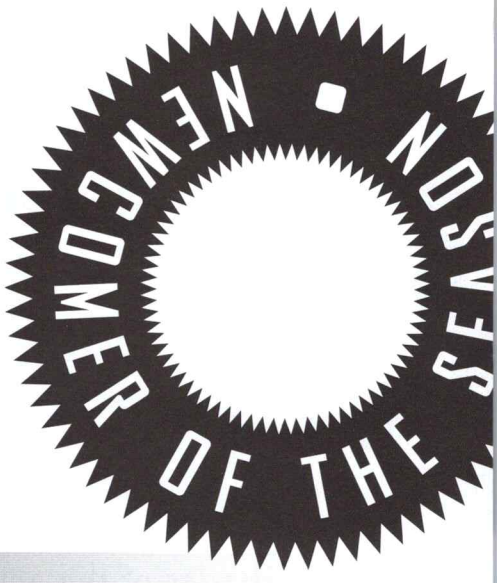
The design of the album could easily link you with labels such as 4AD and Projekt. I suppose you look up to these two labels?

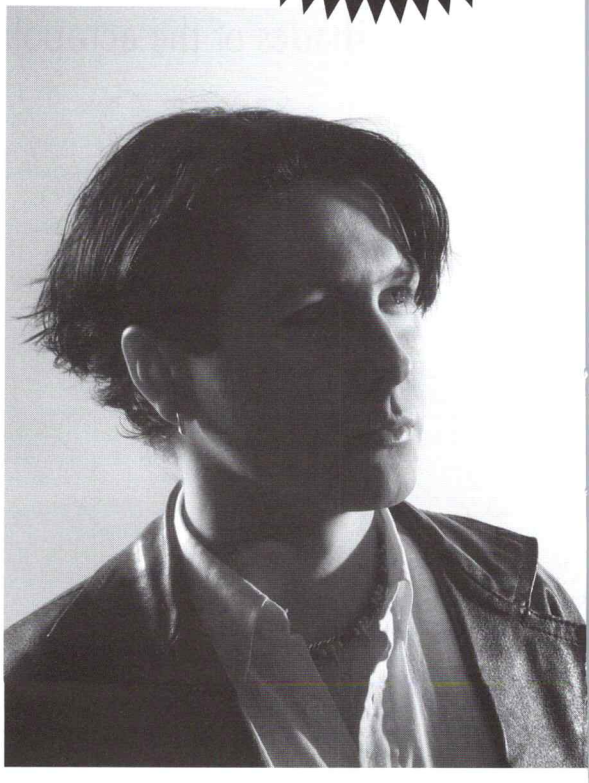
R • The design is as important as our music. We cooperate with a designer who understands our music very well. We spent many hours to have our design reflect the spirit of the album. We think that projects and designs of 4AD and Projekt records are really good, so these comparisons obviously make us happy!

You've played several live concerts this past summer, care to tell how they went?

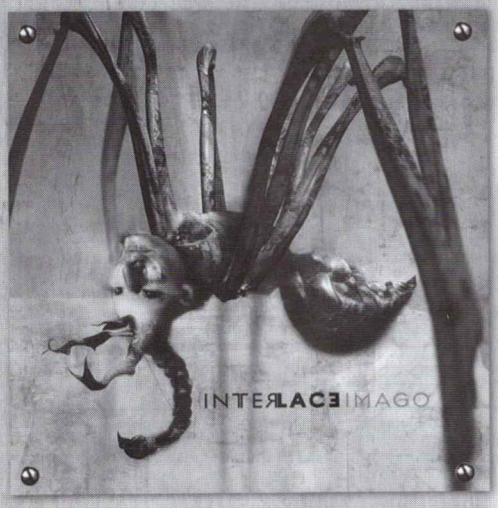
R • I think that our first live gigs were quite well. During our live performance ABL seemed to sound more powerful, because of the guitar player that was added in the line-up. I was positively surprised when I saw our audience singing with us, that was very nice. ABL on stage is pretty different than in the studio.

BY CHRISTINE CORNET





A tough month for electronic music fans



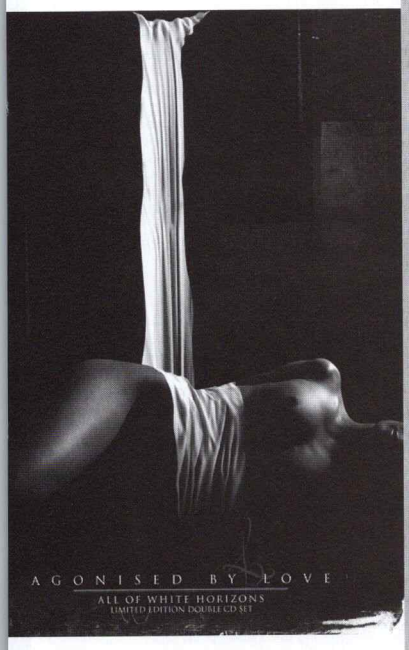
INTERLACE

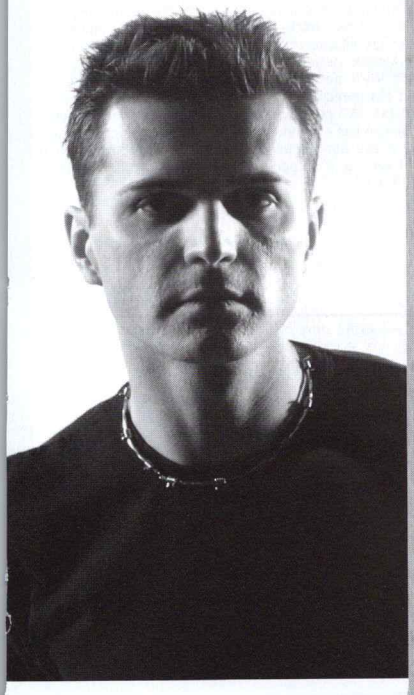
The two year gestation of Swedish dark electronic duo INTERLACE has come to an end. The result is "Imago", an electronic album in the form of a monstrously surreal insect, part human, part animal, and part machine.

The Swedes have now unleashed their homegrown monster, which has concealed itself in the shadows, waiting for the chance to invade our dreams and nightmares.

"Imago" is the musical realization of INTERLACE's unique vision and sets new standards with the quality of its composition, production and artwork. Every track tells its own story. "Sleep On Stones" is a convoluted, intensive experience, while "Elohim" could be an outtake from the first Skinny Puppy album. Unsettling, almost noise-industrial tracks such as "Eclosion" sit next to fragile, beautiful pieces like "Crystalline Hush" and "Candle Burns Blue" that are almost reminiscent of Depeche Mode. Last but not least are the dancefloor smashes "Master" and "Track Two", insuring the album's presence in the clubs.

Imago is an album like a gigantic spiderweb.





VS

MINDLESS FAITH

Take a piece of paper and a pen. Draw an isosceles triangle and in each corner write the name of an independent electronic superstar: Juno Reactor, Front Line Assembly and KMFDM. Now you have an optical representation of the major influences of MINDLESS FAITH.

But this description doesn't even begin to describe the power and innovation contained in their album "Momentum". Songs like "Canaan", "Singular", and the title track will soon be shaking dancefloors everywhere; if they're not, then the DJs who ignore this album might want to rethink their choice of vocation.
This is not an album that begins and ends with its singles: next to the obvious club tracks, "Momentum" contains guitar-laden numbers such as "The Last Time" and "If Not Now, When?" along with soundtrack-oriented material. The stylistic breadth of MINDLESS FAITH can be demanding of the listener, but the courageous are rewarded with a fantastic, challenging album.

So disenchanted fans of electronic music take note: electro is exciting once again.

sepulchral VS **powerful**

www.designforanewbreed.com

www.mindlessfaith.com

dependent

www.dependent.de

MEMENTO MATERIAL MM

DIARY OF DREAMS • *Nigredo*
Accession/Metropolis

THE AZOIC
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ASSEMBLAGE 23 • *Storm*
Accession /Metropolis

MINDLESS FAITH • *Momentum*
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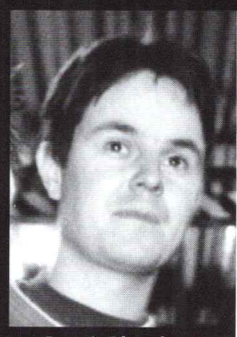


Benoît **Blanchart**

Adrian and his mates break the monotony and turned this new album into something very special. Nigredo is a conceptual album both musically and lyrically and sonds more like an intimate musical confession. The dark ingredients and the typical melancholic elements remain their trademark but they have deepened the exploration of their typical universe offering here a milestone in their discography. The kind of album that could rapidly become a classical reference. Great work. (CF: 9)

After a successful "Conflict" ep, the Azoic strikes back at full speed with an album that mainly focus on danceable and fresh ebm nicely punctuated by their characteristic female vocals. If you liked the ep, you'll appreciate Illuminate although no other cut manages to reach the same level of magic and intensity. The whole album tends thus to be a bit boring and repetitive in the long run... (CF: 6/7)

Tom Shear keeps exploring the same sonic universe as on his previous work. So we get an album with no real surprise: some relentless choruses (nice vocals as usual), some deep pumping basslines and kick, plenty of "future-pop" leads and some dark and melancholic strings. This would turn out excellent for a debut but I expect something more daring or innovative from one of the leaders of this scene. At least fans won't be disappointed but this won't open him new doors... (CF:7)

Great band! MINDLESS FAITH convinced me with the strong material featured on Momentum. This album is filled to the top with interesting harsh electronic music. They cannot deny their influence (FLA, KMFDM or yet NINE INCH NAILS) but nicely regurgitate it into something personal. There are several club-orientated tracks but also some more harsh industrial attempts which help avoiding it becoming too boring. A well balanced album that deserves several listening to deliver its full flavour. (CF:8)

This valuable "best of" cd offers you most hits from this excellent band, including some remixed or reworked versions. From their 4-AD debut (A Day or Stranger) till their most recent darkwave assaults (some tracks sounding more SISTERS OF MERCY-like than the sisters themselves), this collection brings mostly essential tracks. A look at an impressive career which is far from being over. (CF:8/9)

A new Swiss band and to me one of the most refreshing act from quite a long time. MXD produces an hybrid music that fuses together elements form the techno, ebm and metal scene. They immediately evoke the PRODIGY since they keep some kind of a punk rock attitude in their energetic music. There are not many bands who share their ability to jump from one atmosphere to another with the same capacity than MXD. Powerful and uncompromising. (CF: 8)

Bernard **Van Isacker**

I have never been a real fan of Diary Of Dream when it came to studio albums als always preferred the power of their concerts. But this time, the concept behind it is more than intriguing and makes you really want to discover more through the songs lyrics and musical moods. This kind of album which slowly grows on me, more and more. (BVI:8)

For some reason I have a soft spot for The Azoic and especially Kristy's vocals. Her voice is exceptionally sexy but yet extremely strong so that you get this whole effect of dark melodic electro mixed with stark yet subtle female vocals. Although not every track succeeds in surprising me all along the way, I must say that she has stolen my heart! Very entertaining release. (BVI:7/8)

When I get a new A23 in my hands I know what to expect: catchy futurepop tunes, carefully worked on with strong male vocals and a top notch production. I miss the surprise effect? You at least get what you expect but nothing more, but on the other hand, why would this bother most? Look at what happened with APB's "Harmonizer" CD, excellent release but rather badly received by a stagnant scene.. (BVI:7/8)

Dependent is searching some new grounds but I doubt that Mindless Faith will be their next jackpot. Don't get me wrong, the material is more than powerful but is a bit too geographically recognizable and is again no surprise. Mindless Faith has been around for a while, I have come to appreciate their material, but I doubt that this is their best album to date. But then again, the general public sometimes surprises me enormously... (BVI:6)

With this best of the band could only score and that is also to be found in the tracklist offering great tracks that surely will be a nice introduction for many. Add the re-recorded versions of 5 4AD tracks and one can only decide this is more than a welcome gift! I can only recommend this best of. (BVI:8)

Electro-industrial metal from Switzerland. MXD bring a powerful mélange of strong guitar riffs and a very effective electronic rhythm section fueled by vocals that are rather attractive which makes me believe that this band blows off the roof of every avenue they play in. Not my cup of tea to be honest but for sure way better than what is released in this field nowadays. (BVI:6)

Cédric **Wattergniaux**

I always thought that Diary of Dreams would never surpass the 1998 "Psychoma?" album. The last records have just been fruitless attempts to renew the musical content, a bit stagnant though. Finally, "Nigredo" has everything to compete with his illustrious predecessor: catchy melancholic melodies and a true work of research of the perfect emotional track that will touch the listeners. A nice comeback mister Hates! (CX:7/8)

This is finally the 4th full album of the band that counts some addicts in our editorial office since the publishing of their last e.p., "Forward+Conflict". By the way, this last release was indicative of the musical direction of this new record: impressive and wide rhythmics with some trance and electro accents, a clear sound and alluring female vocals. All the ingredients to make an opus to discover in emergency! (CX:8)

"Storm" is, for the moment, certainly one of the most expected albums in our little world of electronic music. Everybody will be pleased to discover that Tom Shear stays faithful to his emotional, catchy and well produced electro-pop. I was just hoping that he would find the way to explore new horizons, to innovate a bit, but apart from the title and the artwork, nothing has changed since "Defiance". An entertaining album though. (CX:7)

This is without any shadows of doubt the album that will bring Mindless Faith to another level, more famous also here in Europe among the electro people greedy for intelligent and well constructed music with a remarkable and alluring male voice and that will not spit on some crossover influences here and there. Forget about Funker Vogt, Mindless Faith belongs to the new generation! (CX:8)

Here comes the best of from this cult band who have been haunting our music life for 20 years! Although some might miss a song like "Michelle", we also get 4AD-period songs rerecorded for our pleasure... The resurrection era consists of collection of now legendary and live favourite titles like "Jasmine And Rose", "Consolation" or "Out Of The Rain". More than essential! (CX:8)

MXD seems to be to the music what dada was to literature. A group of young rebellious and people with a certain sense of humour, who want to wake up human consciousness deluded by the traditional moral values. The awakening is certainly the slogan for this release sometimes with big beat/break beat, metal hardcore, electropop with the ghost of the Young Gods. Original and heteroclite! (CX:6/7)

Patrick **Falque**

A new DOD album is always an event. This new concept album will delight the fans and will probably gain new ones. The atmosphere is dense, heavy and oppressive; it holds the listener spellbound all along the 70 minutes of the album. Two years for such a pearl, it was worth it. Maybe the best DOD album ever. (PF:8)

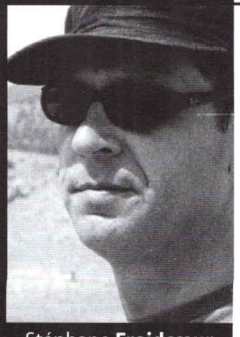
The strength of The Azoic is their capacity to manage with efficiency a full of different influences like, trance, techno, ebm and darkwave to create their own style and sound. If their previous albums contained some smash club hits, "Illuminate" goes one step further; each track is a potential club hit. Essential! (PF:9)

A23 strikes for the fourth time; I'm a huge fan of Tom's work since "Contempt". This time, I was ready to be deceived, the receipt is well known now and should be weary... but once again, it's a masterpiece; Tom's music has a magical effect on my person, I'm like hypnotised. No weak moment, a must! (PF:9)

My preference in MF's work goes to the more uptempo beat tracks like "Canaan", "Singular" or "Momentum" in which I perceive the influence of Juno Reactor. Other influences perceived are Prodigy for the power, Nine Inch Nails or yet Razed in Black. With these references, the album couldn't be bad even if it is quite unequal. (PF:7)

To celebrate two decades of existence, COX "offers" us this best of album containing an average of two tracks from each COX album, occulting the Xymox period (1988-1995). We'll note that the band has re-recorded songs from the 4AD period. A gift for fans or just a commercial aim? If you don't know the band yet buy it immediately... (PF:6/7)

A disconcerting album! Disconcerting because each track is different of the previous one and the influences are numerous. I first felt the shadow of Fear Factory, then Chemical Brothers, Junkie XL, the Young Gods, Rammstein and so on. Original, diversified blending pop, rock, metal, techno, big beat, industrial ...A band to follow indeed. (PF:7/8)



Stéphane **Froidcœur**

Despite all efforts from my side-line colleagues to convince me that DOD is a real cool band, I've never been into their sound! Well, "Nigredo" now appears to be the exception to the rule. This opus is full of variety and emotions. It moves from gothic minded bombastic parts to refined and sensitive ballads revealing some vague neo-classical influences. This is a meaningful album, which didn't leave me *insensitive! (DP:7/8)*

This American duo simply belongs to my favorites in the progressive electronic underground style. Their new full length simply confirms their knowledge and ability to create fresh and hypnotic electronic structures driven by good-danceable beats and the enigmatic, into sensuality female vocals of Kristy Venrick. The "Conflict"-song remains their absolute hit, but there's a lot to taste and enjoy here! An excellent pro*duction! (DP:8/9)*

No real secrets here, A23 simply goes on with his traditional and successful futurepop receipt! A23 proves us here why this band belongs to the top of its style! This is a terrific mix of amazing melody lines and hard danceable club beats. The link between synth-pop and EBM has been already successfully accomplished! (DP:8/9)

MF stands for an incredible dark EBM power with a high tech production! This is probably one of the single bands of the scene delivering such an overwhelming power of sound. "Momentum" sounds like an electronic sonic bomb with the club floors as main target! This is for sure one of the best albums of the year! (DP:9)

The successful story of Clan Of Xymox started some 20 years ago on the legendary 4AD-label. COX definitely belongs to the history of wave and gothic music and this "Best of" is an excellent opportunity to travel through their impressive discography and career! I've often compared their guitar wave to the sisters Of Mercy, but with the difference that COX liked to use some electronic parts as well. (DP:6/7)

This Swiss band avoids any kind of compromise, but just mixed different ideas with each other. Just imagine to face a hybrid of Young Gods and Junkie XL. It's a powerful cocktail of harsh guitar parts and hypnotic techno-trance electronics. It all sounds like they don't really take themselves too serious, but their sound is damned efficient! (DP:8)

DISPLACER
Arroyo • M-tronic

Well, I actually only knew this project from a few remixes here and there and I was probably expecting something more harsh or brutal form this album. The fact is that the music featured here is some kind of static atmospheric electro. If you except some nicely filtered drum-loops and some scarce basslines, the whole is a bit too much relying on pads and strings. Some more details or depths for most of the tracks could have helped enhance the production. Maybe too soft for me? (CF: 6)

Displacer must be on of my favourite bands on M-Tronic bringing soundscapes that remind me of the most interesting moments of Autechre before they started going ultra weird and less interesting. Sound wise Displacer has gained in maturity bringing the track on the forefront and focusing more on touching lines that then dwell throughout the song. A very enjoyable and relaxing album. (BVI:7)

I remember that I really enjoy the first album of Displacer. "Arroyo'" will certainly not change the faith that I have in this project. This (almost) instrumental between trip-hop and ambient (if you forget the collaboration with Victoria Lloyd) music is still surreal, full of amazing freshness but always strange like the soundtrack of a new recovered psychopath always on the razor wire. Beautifully purifying! (CX:8/9)

I'd never heard Displacer before, but I thought I'd find destructured and deconstructed melodies and experimental electronics. I found some tracks in this mood but I also found some tracks nearer from drum'n'bass and that's also not my cup of tea. On the other hand, I was seduced by ambient intros in which came a slow dub beat, a kind of invitation to travel like The Orb did a decade ago.Entertaining. (PF:7)

The new full length of Displacer is a new piece of fascinating ambient electronics. M. Morton perfectly assimilates ambient impressions together with low tempo triphop rhythms. You feel like travelling through distant galaxies and undiscovered stars. A real fascinating trip through the unknown! (DP:7)DP.

INTERLACE • *Imago*
Memento Materia/Dependent

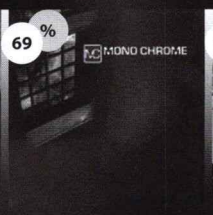
Interlace haven't denied their previous influences and some tracks are still S. PUPPY or FLA-tainted and I won't reproach it cos they excel in producing complex and multi-layered sequences. This CD shows a greater maturity and also proves to be the right time for more personal stuff. They even incorporated some softer ingredients or compositions. Less club orientated but more soulful so this is worth a listen! (CF:7/8)

The first album of this swedish trio did not exactly leave an everlasting impression with me and I'm afraid this new album won't do the trick either. I must admit that some of the sounds used are interesting and that the production is excellent, but I miss something... While the artwork is rather tasty, I do not think it will justify the attention I have for the content of this album. (BVI:6)

The chaos of the first album and the undeniable influence of Skinny Puppy are still present in this second album of Interlace. We can also notice with a certain pleasure that they try to incorporate some element of refinement. Even if I'm convinced that this band will stay a reference in the genre, I have still difficulty to digest a full album. (CX:6/7)

Interlace really impressed me with its first album, the ambience reminded me the essence of Skinny Puppy. This new opus doesn't deny this impression; the tracks are mostly downtempo, the ambience is cold and oppressive, and the voices are sometimes clear and melodious, sometimes dark and whispered and sometimes hoarse and angry. A brilliant album. (PF:8)

Their debut cd was really promising! I expected quite a lot of this successor and the amazing debut songs only confirm all my hopes! But suddenly, the Interlace motor goes in search of slower and more moody experiments. This is a band with 2 sides and you better prefer the quiet one because most of the tracks have been composed in this dark atmospheric electronic body side! Complex electronics with some real cool cuts, but I personally expected more! (DP:7)



MONO CHROME • *Collapse And Sever* • Cryonica/Metropolis

This new duet in the female fronted electronic realm brings two strong personalities together resulting in a rather seducing album. The sound is strong and well-produced, the vocals are spelling and bewitching while numerous potential hits emerge. Between futurepop and EBM, MONO CHROME is the kind of band that seems to have a strong potential. This pleasant first album sounds promising and fresh enough to help them gaining a deserved recognition. (CF: 7/8)

This album musically perhaps holds the road for electro fans, but it will not attract many people outside that circle for being too limited sound wise. Don't get me wrong, the album has its merits but there is a lot more possible, especially with Victoria's voice. I would advise the band to search new musical grounds and open it to a larger public. (BVI:6/7)

Mono Chrome suffer from a lack of layers and emotion, even, if in a technical point of view, this album is really quite innovative (it was made exclusively on a computer). I should also add that I like both artists in their respective band but I can't stop thinking that they sound more relaxed and in their element with their former group than in this incarnation. (CX:6)

MC is the association between Victoria Lloyd (Claire Voyant) and Clint M Sand (Cut.Rate.Box). The result is a pleasant album blending modern electro, ebm and new wave from the 80's. it's musically well made, rhythmically diversified, vocally talented, warm and powerful. A promising reunion. To Follow. (7/8)

MC is much more than the sensual pop vocals of Victoria Lloyd! MC stands for a refreshing electronic production merging pop elements and EBM. "Collapse and server" becomes a quite dynamic album, featuring remarkable pieces like "Riveted","Fall in to you", "Sold" and a remix of "Riveted" by Assemblage 23! This is an excellent debut, which just wets my appetite for more! (DP:7)

ENDANGER • *Addicted To The Masses* • Infacting Rec

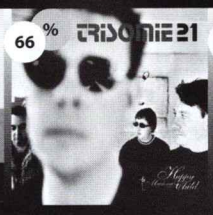
Too commercial and too soft for my ears, the music from ENDANGER is some kind of a sweet technopop that leaves me quite indifferent. The quality of their music is undeniable and this album might find its place and recognition among the fans of this genre. If you dig what the label A Different Drum signs, then ENDANGER is an unavoidable band. Otherwise just avoid it. (CF: 5/6)

While Endanger have more than one catchy and attention grabbing hit ingredient to make it, I have this feeling that they would stand even have better chances if they were to go for the mainstream charts. Why? Because if I hear this music eyes closed and imagine listening to one of the popular charts I hear no difference with the electro fluffy pop being played in there. Good stuff for in the car, less good for listening at home I fear... (BVI:7)

I really guess that the German electro-pop duo wants to touch the majority of the club addicts with a resolutely commercial sound. Actually, most of the tracks are dancefloor oriented songs without a... soul and this kind of emotional depth is essential in all respectable good pop opus. However, let's note that the production is really efficient for this kind of release. Too soft for me... (CX:6/7)

This third album from this electro-pop project delivers us more than a honest work blending modern electro, dancefloors tunes and more 80's influenced tracks like the New Order's inspired "Spark", the pop side provided mostly by the vocals while musically, it oscillates between trance and future pop. Pleasant and accessible, this album will please all the electro pop fans. (PF:7/8)

The new album of Endanger is definitely pure synth-pop, moving in between the classical standards and patterns of the genre and heavier danceable forms à la Syrian. I personally go for the heavier and club-orientated side with tracks like "Give me a reason","Like heaven","Addicted to the masses" and "Victory of the heart". This is my favorite Endanger release in history! (DP:7)



TRISOMIE 21 • *Happy Mystery Child* • Le Maqui

The two French brothers gathered a new band anf brak their long silence after their 80's glory... The ingredients which made their success are still highly recognisable (the typical voice, the kind of French touch). The first half of the album witnesses a promising rebirth while the second half never reaches a satisfying level of quality. They are a bit like a satellite in the nowadays current scene but might sound fresh to people who never heard anything from them. It could have been better and worse at the same time... (CF:6)

Trisomie 21 are back again bringing gentle cold wave tracks that remind of the old days. Many will however recognize the French English by the vocalist that hovers over the tracks. This is an example of a band that aged with gratitude not loosing itself in reviving the past in a old fashioned way. Very entertaining album and a must have for T21 fans! (BVI:8)

The Lomprez brothers have put the Trisomie 21 cape on again for a satisfying result, even if it sounds anachronistic sometimes. However, these legendary Frenchmen don't loose their sweet melancholy and their efficient minimalism. Let's add that this new record is also an opportunity to see them live again to listen to "Il se noie", "La fête triste", in brief, the soundtrack of our... teenage years. (CX:6/7)

Another legend comes back. I've never been a fan of T21 because I didn't like the voice. So, the opening track of this album was a good surprise, it's a kind of mix between Frankie Goes to Hollywood and Massive Attack. The rest of the album is more problematic because of the recurrent problem of the voice, but melodies are pleasant and the rhythm and tempo diversified. An interesting album... if you like the voice. (PF:6/7)

And another legendary new-wave band makes its come back! It seems to be trendy to awaken ghosts, but most of them can't really convince me! T21 remains faithful to their guitar wave style, but adds a few modern touches as well! I especially like the rhythms, which are quite trip-pop like and sensual while a few techno elements appear in the background of some songs. It all sounds like the Cure of the 80s mixed with some elements of the millennium! Acceptable, but not groundbreaking! (DP:6)

FEKTION FEKLER
Into The Sun • Black Flames

This brand new album from that American project is another step into their particular world of electronic music. It's hard to classify them properly since they easily jump form one style to another: from straight ebm to more club techno stuff, from highly distorted to ultra clean sweet pieces. Self Torture is a cold song as well as Take it All, but the rest of the album sometimes sounds a bit outdated to really catch my attention. (CF: 6)

Moksha must have been my first introduction to the work of the brothers Bustamante and I instantly picked it up. This release particularly was interesting seeing the different approaches you get, dance or guitars, it's all present here. An entertaining release, not new as such but a good listen for sure. (BVI:7)

I know that it's not always good to make comparisons in music. Actually, every band has its own style and concept, but the weakish production work of this album and average vocals give me doubts about Fektion Fekler. Is it coincidence if one track is called "Self Torture"? I can't save them... (CX:4)

After five years of silence, FF returns with a new album which let me a half-hearted feeling. None of the tracks really caught my attention until "Through the Days", the only acoustic pop/folk track, a beautiful ballad. For the rest, I found it not pop enough or not dark enough or yet not harsh enough. "Into the Sun" didn't really inspire me. (PF:6)

FF seems to have awakened of a long hibernation, delivering a new step towards electronic modernism. Well, modernism isn't exactly the right word as their sound is definitely influenced by the 80s electronics. It's just that this band has evolved from a kind of guitar gothic style into more electro structures. The way of singing has considerably evolved as well, but there is still work there! (DP:6)

CHECKLINE

ABSORBER

Open Your Eyes • (cd Pandailectric Records)

When I received the promo cd of this band, I was telling myself: "This is another cheap and cliché electro band with a stupid, boring and pompous concept and I must do the interview... There are so many good bands! Why me?" I have quickly insert the cd inside my new hi-fi and... what a surprise! Firstly, this band makes a very attractive electro-pop music and secondly every track seems to benefit from an intelligent and clear production. The sound and the melodic research are extremely interesting such as the voice. Among the influences and the unavoidable similarities, let's quote Camouflage, Melotron, Sero.Overdose,... If you have to buy one electro-pop for this season... buy this one! (CX:8/9) CX.

ALIEN#SIX 13

Establishing alpha • (cd A Different Drum)

I've been awaiting this debut-cd for quite a long time now! After the excellent and hard danceable "Imagery of ecstasy"-maxi, it took quite a long time to Geoff Pinckney to release the album. Geoff is for sure known for is involvement in The Nine. This project is probably more personal and definitely different with The Nine. A few synth-pop elements are still easy to recognize, but this is definitely more into harder danceable spheres. "Establishing alpha" becomes a quite diversified album and not that representative for what we've heard on the Mcd. It starts with the cool and groovy d&b inspired "Disc form" to move next into more wafting electro-dance fields. "Highway to the sun" is a cool cut containing a great bass line. Next comes the "Mello"-cut, which already covers other ideas. *It all feels like inspired by Underworld* meets Stereo Mc's. The "Holding onto something"-song is the 1st sung piece and closer to traditional synth-pop music. "Away above the stars" goes on the pop inspiration while "You've got the city" is a little bit bizarre. I can't really explain what's going here, but I get the impression to hear The Nine mixed together with George Michael. Well, for so far, this is not exactly what I'd expected, but it doesn't take away that the album sounds ultra diversified! The best is yet to come with the cool "C Squared"-piece. This is much more into underground, revealing irresistible bleeps and an efficient robot-like vocoder effect on the vocals. "Flogenic" is a last piece I would like to mention for already a great, deep bass line and some groovy sequences. I don't exactly understand, which kind of album G. Pinckney would release, but it sounds like he found a way to exorcise all ideas he couldn't drop in The Nine! I personally expected much more out of this debut full length! (DP:6/7)DP.

THE ANCIENT GALLERY

Alles ist Nichts • (cd Dark Wings)

AG is a German quartet, releasing here a successor to their "Desinstallation"-cd. The sound and style of the band will irremediably appeal for some comparisons with Rammstein. The mix of guitar riffs and electronic structures plus German vocals became the trademark of Rammstein and an unavoidable source of comparison for the critics. I think this comparison just stands to describe their style and influences, but their real sound probably stands in between Rammstein and the latest releases of Blind Passengers. The production is quite well done, but on the long run I feel like it's missing real hits. It all sounds a bit too similar, like my fascination slips away in the midst of the cd. Nevertheless I noticed some cool cuts like the melodious into bombast sounding "Was wir *Wollen*", the hard mix of guitar and electronics on "Teil des Ganzen", the some darker "Kopfdelay" and quiet "Very hard to...". This last piece is the only song sung in English, featuring guest vocalist Sui Yamamoto of Kazmikaze 52. It's not bad at all, but the global feeling is that it remains an average release in its own genre! (DP:6)DP.

ANTIWORLD

Comedy of Terrors • (cd Dark Dimensions)

At first sight, this American band looks like the new gothic sensation! But, from the very first til the last seconds of this album they seem to have convinced me of the contrary. Even if we can perceive some clichés here and there, their music has nothing to do with gothic and rely more on a total punk attitude. The compositions are stripped to the core and the production is almost absent leaving us with the impression that THE CRAMPS themselves are producing a cleaner music than ANTIWORLD! The lyrics and themes developed are maybe more explicit and deal with childish horror and freak stories. Fun at certain moments but also pathetic at others. I wonder who listens to such weird combination. (CF: 2/3) CF.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Death (special edition 2004) • (CD Floating Fish Studios)

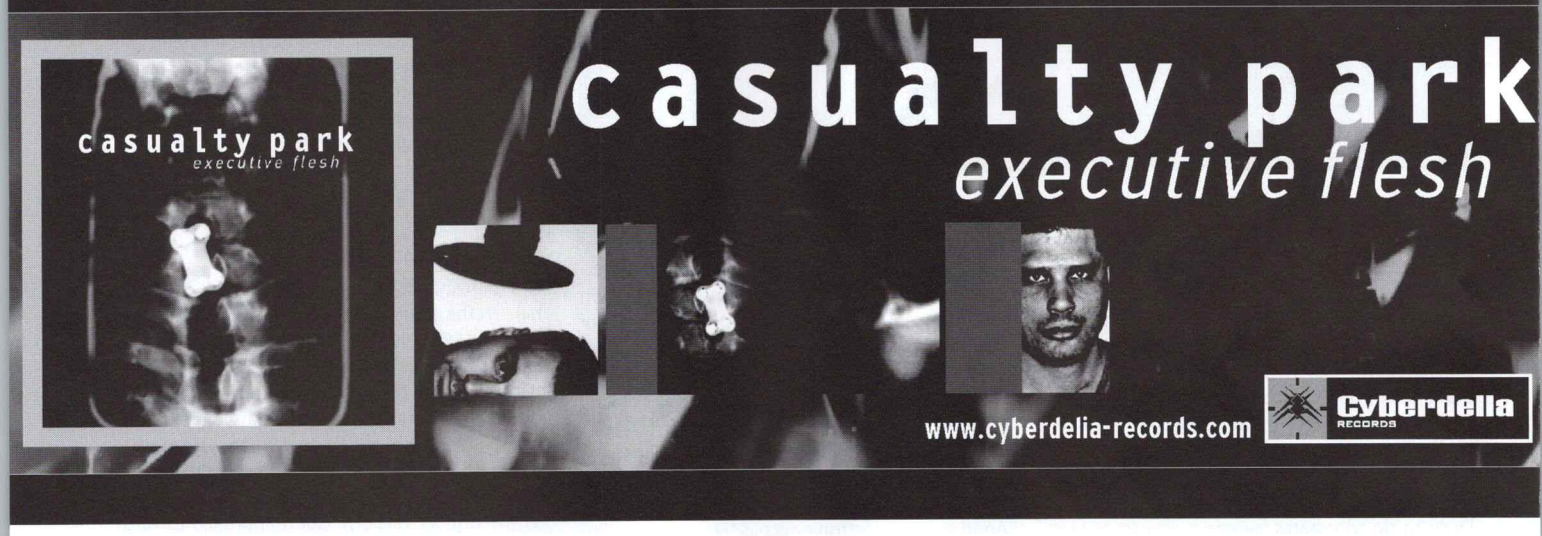
Fronted by Ttam Troll and MC2P4, the US electro-terrorists from Any Questions? are one of the few acts in their genre who have managed staying faithful to their initial concept and can be proud to be able to produce and launch uncompromising industrial music via the platform of their own label Floating Fish Studios. After the re-release of "Prey for Death" (Special Edition) in 2002, today sees the re-release of their "Death" album (initially released in 1996). This special edition was remastered and features bonus tracks, a limited edition DigiPak packaging, and a dark cybernetic artwork by Eyes of Chaos creator Mike Bohatch. Worth the mention as well, nobody else but Brad Vance from Red Mastering (who also worked on cEvin Key's "Vault Series" recordings of Skinny Puppy for eg.) did the remastering work, giving them this way a second breath of life. For those who are not familiar with this album from Any Questions?, you may expect harsh electronic music open to experiments of all forms... They bring you in the most desolated lands and darker urban corners of the galaxy, these unique places where your evil nightmares too often tend to become reality. The bonus tracks include two live tracks recorded in 1991 and 2 new studio recordings that are "War Broke (you will die)" and "Sonic Death Line". Definitely an album for hardcore fans of the good old early nineties American industrial type of sound. Fans of Controlled Bleeding or even ezrly Numb would love this record! We also heard that the band also plans to give their earlier releases the same treatment, to be continued. www.floating-fish.com (TSF:7) TSF.

APOPTYGMA BERZERK

Unicorn • (cds WEA Records)

After an exceptionally long delay, this final single from the Harmonizer album has finally been released. Included within are seven remixes of the title track, one new song, a remix of "Pikachu TM", a cover of the Cure's "A Strange Day", and lastly a live version of their classic "Non-Stop Violence" from their performance in Tel Aviv. Of the remixes, I found the "Video Version" of "Unicorn" to be my

Le Fantastique Night IX
Persephone
+ Nehl Aëlin
Botanique (witloof bar) - Brussels - Saturday December 18th 2004
Heavenly voices, medieval & gothic afterparty (Gore [The Dawn Visitors] & LeZandre [Chiroptera])



personal favorite. It captures the rock sound forged during the Harmonizer tour, lending staccato metal guitar riffs and drums to its techno pop to forge new territory in their sonic domain. Another glee-inducing surprise is the remix by Hocico, wherein the interplay their signature dark and heavy EBM in quality contrast to Stephan Groth's heartfelt vocals. The other mixes veer in the direction of the straightforward. Fairlight Children vocode "Unicorn" into chipper minimal electroclash, with the Freezepop mix being similar although a bit more stark and lacking the rather excessive vocal effects. T.O.Y. as well as Alan Cohen lean the piece further towards driving electro-industrial club beats, and the Drugwar remix adds skittering drum breaks and a touch of robotic ambience. Bass ripples and a sputtering beat flavor No Comment's "Pikachu™". The new track, "114 BPM" bears a harsh dark trance rhythm and a malevolent steadiness in its motion. It feels like there has been a bit of a Suicide Commando influence at work here, and is quite an interesting track. The Cure cover returns the guitars to the music, but is a bit stilted. For a single, Unicorn brandishes a bevy of material, and while there are a few timid remixes, the successes are stunning. (VM:7) Vlad M.

ASSEMBLAGE 23

Let The Wind Erase Me • (mcd accession records)

Never one to run out of creative, original ideas, Mr. Shear has forgone the now redundant practice of offering a dozen remixes of a single track interpreted by eager to be noticed electronic artists, "Let The Wind Erase Me" introduces an exciting new concept: offer a few radically different and resung versions of the song and allows the listener to wallow in the messy, but satisfying, aftermath. Surprisingly, it works very well. The club version offers a slightly higher BPM with buried, treated vocal effects while the sinister evilness of the 'Hard' version taps deeply into our souls. The real gems are the b-sides. "Darker" pulls the listener through a melodic journey of sonic mayhem while the affable, slower pace of "Tragic Figure" recalls visions of the best a modern synthpop groove has to offer. I hope this single starts a trend amongst the scene as the extra effort and loving care is evident in each chord. Good stuff. (DK:6/7) DK.

ATTRITION

Dante's Kitchen • (cd Big Blue)

Dante's Kitchen brandishes a reborn sound for Attrition, abundant with new influences and passion. Certainly, one can draw a few comparisons to the sound the fluxes throughout. The eerie opera of Die Form, the sultry rhythms of recent Massive Attack, and the alien organics of perhaps Coil. Preceded by the introductory tortured violin of "Andante", the disc plunges into the disjointed dance macabre of the title track. Martin Bowes gravel voice bristles across break beats as high-pitched female operatic pleads for divine help. "The Head of Gabriel" continues with reptilian grace; an elastic bass beat twang here summons the shimmer of ghostly ethereal vocal as the violin flutters around like a moth lost in the piece's trance. Warm warbling waves of bass carry driftwood banshees and samples through "The Long Hall", before being disrupted by a frenetic rhythm, as their chanteuse is chased by a retro horror keyboard line. "A Ladder" is a seething dub exploration that bounds through in nocturnal slow motion, while the subterranean samba of "Two Gods" is enhanced by doom-laden violin while the title repeated as a mantra. "Dreamcatcher" exhales a nightmare underneath banshee wails and nightmare-depicting dialogue samples, spilling out natural drums that somewhat slice through its claustrophobic tension. Attrition also delves back into their worlds of dark ambience. "Feed the Crow" is a grim piece haunted by the hiss and clunk of ancient steam tunnels amidst the choppy flutter of electronics and banshee sighs. Finally, the closing "Still Life?" glistens with ambient textures and the birdcall of flutes before being drenched in a field recording of a foreboding storm. Overall, I find Dante's Kitchen is balanced precisely between ominous soundtracks and the vivid thrum of fetish-istic techno. Enthralling as well as eerie, it might be their best effort to date. (VM:8) VM.

BAK XIII

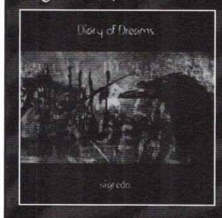
In Cauda Vevenum • (CD Urgence Disks)

The Swiss duo of DDDMix & Baron Von Smocker have appeared, pretty much from out of nowhere, it seems with a pretty decent EBM/industrial debut, proclaiming a talented new act to take notice of. There are a number of good tracks to be found here, including "Perfect Survivor" which mixes dark melodics with more industrial effects, the

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 01

DIARY OF DREAMS

Nigredo • (cd Accession Rec)



More than two years after the previous last full album "Freak Perfume", Diary Of Dreams return with what should be seen as their most important and impressive opus ever. Based upon ancient mythology and myths, an own world and history was created, that has no good intention with humanity. That dark and tormented half-real half-fictional entity seems to have taken control of the heart and soul of Diary Of Dreams who carry us with their new "Nigredo" CD into the abysmal depths of a subliminal coordinated chaos-world. Shimmering with darkness, the German band's new masterpiece is bound to become a "classic" album in its genre. Although I strongly believed that the more electronic and upbeat allure of the previous "Panik Manifesto" ep was the way to go for Diary Of Dreams, I must admit today that I was wrong! The very claustrophobic sound approach of "Nigredo" manages to create such a dense, pessimistic and forceful atmosphere that you almost suffocate and gasp for air at the end of each song. But each time, the dynamic of the music arrangements and the high-energy of their production work catch you before you fall and throw you again into the cycle of life for some more sadness and melancholy. What a delight for me to see artists with such huge discography behind their back, be able to still sound so much passionate and spontaneous in their work. A conceptual album on which Diary Of Dreams show us how much beauty can be threatening and threat can be beautiful..."Nigredo" deserves an impressive theatrical stage show to be performed live with the same intensity it releases. A disc that will not leave my multi-CD-player for another 5 years at least... And each time it stops playing, the raven at my window knocks and says, I quote: "forever more!"... (TSF:10) TSF.

danceable & upbeat "80s Are Back Forever" which, if I've judged the lyrics right, refers to the odious yuppie culture of the time, the solid & hard-hitting "Happy Slave" or the opening "Good Old Time" where the combination or excellent sequencing & effected vocals are a well-appreciated touch, one the band make good use of throughout. Christophe Geinoz's guitar adds extra bite to the nicely gritty "Remember" as well as the slowly mechanical, almost grinding cover of "Are "Friends' Electric", working well on the chorus in particular & even if the monotone vocals aren't likely to do too many favours it should at least mean the album will get mentioned by Numanoids which should help them. The classical opening of "She Knows" which is abruptly ended by the needle being hurriedly taken off shows a nice touch of the unpredictable (& humor, possibly), leaving the coast clear for another solid rhythmic track, well up to standard although they've yet to acquire the charisma to get away with lines such as "Licking yer tits/sucking yer substance" so "Paradise", which features them is a bit cringe-making as a result although "Perfect Survivor" which follows makes up for this with a track that, if promoted properly, could well have a wide appeal among all electro lovers before the short power-noise instrumental that is "Torture" &, in complete contrast the melodic "Sad Song" bring the album to a close. This album is proof that you don't have to be a slave to the usual 'club' or 'dancefloor' considerations to produce a fine album, being different enough to stand out but sufficiently catchy enough to appeal to most EBM lovers (clj:6/7)CLJ.

BATTERY CAGE

World Wide Wasteland • (cd Metropolis)

With the success of his efforts within recent Informätik material, Tyler Newman has finally been able to re-launch his original project out to the masses. Anthems are plentiful from beginning to end, and almost all the tracks are worthy of stomping around a strobe-strafed club floor. The roughest moment comes with the guitar heavy "Wasteland", where KMFDM inspired metal riffs burst forth to race alongside an insistent trance structure. "Anti Angel" also is sliced at its bridges with power chords, while drum machines and synthesizers impeccably flex through time changes in this epic of disappointment and deception. There is also the anti-Bush administration rap industrial of the explosive protest march of "Statemachine", whose semi-rapped lyrics and insistent sound show Stromkern's influence. While the rivethead guitar work is present in the above, there is still plenty of EBM to explore. "Caged", whose lyrics bears heavy animal rights imagery, has moody synth work set to a seductive bass thump, with a nice synthetic ascending chorus. Another nice electronic slice is "Mirror Image Enemy", whose keyboards wriggle through a serpentine tunnel of burbling sci-fi trance before leaping into a rollicking beat. Lastly, "Ecstasy" brings sonic imagery of a rave soundtrack with a heavy dose of adrenaline surging through its veins. While their demos were burdened with a heavy Front Line Assembly influence, Newman and company have shed this comparison. Instead, this new material has more in common with Stromkern as well as sharing sonic traits with Newman's work within Informätik. Despite their setbacks, Battery Cage have produced a strong debut that will certainly please the modern electro audience. (VM:8) Vlad M.

BETA

Reflections In Darkness • (CD BLC Productions)

Looking for a high-energy release that explores inner nightmares of our mind? If so Beta has just released "Reflections In Darkness," which is the follow-up to "Without/ Within" out now on their label BLC Productions. The release also includes several remixes from today's rising industrial artists such as Schattenschlag and Agonoize If your familiar with these artists you will get an idea of what to expect. "Reflections of Darkness" is full of brutal assault of industrial rhythms and harsh melodies that will be perfect for industrial dance floors across the globe. Many of the tracks have samples build within and atmospheric compositions. Of course built into these aggressive melodies would be the dark-electro beats especially in Fait Accompli (Beta Vs. Brutal Bastion) that would be great for dancing too. This is dark- electro at its finest with many well – composed tracks that combine the perfect touch of dark- electro soundscapes that really send shockwaves to the listener. Recommended tracks should be all but for now I would go with: Darkness, "Nightstalkers", "Splintered" (Presistence of Memory Mix, "Vengeance" and "Escape" (JJ:7/8) JJ.

B! MACHINE

Angels • (MCD A Different Drum)

On this 8 track single we get 1 un-remixed track "3rd floor" (plus a remix as well) together with 3 remixes of the title track (of which the Syrian mix is the most club-minded one, while the Null Device version is more subtle) and reworks by Nate Nicoll himself of "Ode" (a very relaxed version) and "Spring and autumn". Mike Hayden of Focalplane took "This dark day" and turned it into. If you want to discover the different views on this band's work, this MCD with extended playing time is a nice introduction. For me personally it all stays a bit to kind, nevertheless B! Machine fans will not be disappointed. (BVI : 6-7) BVI

BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL

Scarecrow • (mcd Projekt)

After Tarnished (a song which is also featured here in the shape of an excellent light electronic remix by EGO LIKENESS, my favourite), the second extract taken from BTFABG's new album is entitled Scarecrow but is only featured here in the album version. This cd also offers three alternative versions to the songs Dagger, Already Forgotten and Halo Star, these songs being slightly remixed but keeping the same moods and atmospheres as the orginal versions. Good approach towards the new album and sound from Sam Rosenthal' s band though only the remix of Tarnish turns out to be unavoidable. It could have been interesting to get some more remixes of the same kind! (CF: 7/8) CF.

BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL

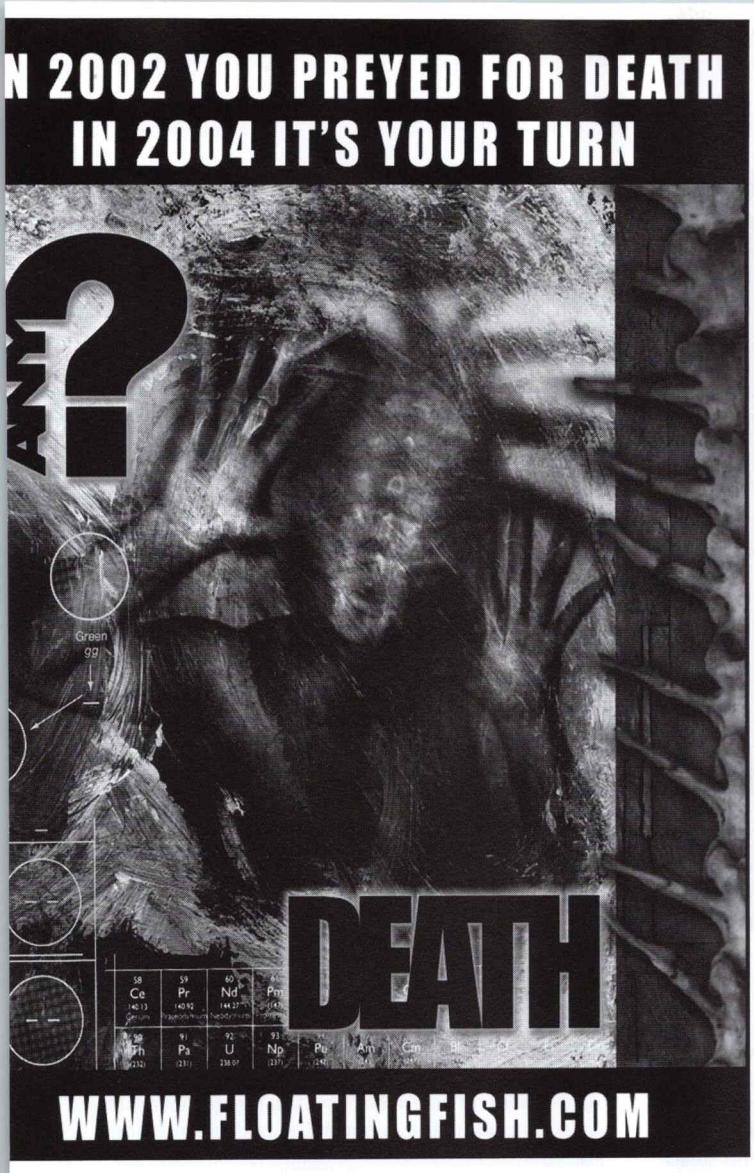
Halo Star • (cd Projekt)

Halo Star is undoubtedly the kind of album that initiates a change into the musical universe of BTFABG. At least it announces a break with the very typical atmospheric and more ambient style of this intriguing project. Sam Rosenthal reduced the length of his compositions as well as the length of its reverb's tails! Ethereal and soft as always, the new tracks are nevertheless more structured and designed so as to fit to the darkwave and gothic standards. The accent has been put on building song rather than long pieces of music. Some will find it more accessible and digestible while others might miss the more experimental and avant-garde aspect from BTFABG (though a cut like the Fourth Footstep enables the link with their previous work). Halo Star has in any cases a greater commercial potential than its predecessors and might also, with tracks such as Tarnished, Scarecrow or Knock Three Times, find a way through the coming live appearances of the band. (CF: 8) CF.

BLIND FAITH AND ENVY

The charming factor • (cd Infacted Recordings)

Just like The Azoic, BFAE has been licensed to Infacted Recordings for the European market. This



album contains exactly the same songs and tracklist as the album on Nilaihah Records, so there's no bonus for the young fans of the band. I'm not considering myself as a die-hard fan, but the sound of BFAE deeply impressed me! Their music has been for sure influenced by the 80s electropop movement and it's probably not a coincidence if they made a cover version of Depeche Mode's "Shout". It's for sure one of the single songs, which didn't really impress me more than that! The best way to discover the potential of BFAE is to pay some attention for one of their absolute masterpieces entitled "Slightest wave". This is an incredible cut full of outstanding arrangements and some great 80s spirit, which comes to recover to whole track. BFAE composes compelling and original structures, which are much more than inspired by the 80s. They possess a kind of singular way of writing while the vocal performance of Charlene April is hot hot hot! This girl has a natural sensual way of singing, which is now and than combined by some sad moods. The "Major philosopher"-song is an excellent illustration of this duality between sensuality and melancholia. A next essential element of this band is the power of the rhythmic. We're not very used to hear synth-pop bands experimenting with complex drum patterns, but there's an overwhelming wave of power emerging from the rhythmic! In a harder and definitely danceable way, the "When I know you're gone"-song contains a carrying chorus and real cool bass line. I think there's a lot to say about this debut-opus, which is according to me more than successful. It's just that it will be not easy, dealing with such a popular style of music to break through! Anyway, this band gets my total support! (DP:8)DP.

BLUE BIRDS REFUSE TO FLY

Anapteroma • (CD Decadance Records)

Blue Birds Refuse To Fly is the personal project of Kyriakos Poursanides, keyboard player for the Greek indie band Wasteland (1990-1998). "Anapteroma" is the second release for Blue Birds Refuse To Fly who already released a first album "Give me the wings" (Physis Records) in 1998. On this second album the role of the basic singer is given to George Dedes (The Illusion Fades), replacing Cristina Mihalitsi and George Priniotakis from the previous album. Musically the sound has moved to a more dance orientated approach though remaining in the electro/futurepop field. The material will for sure remind of the work by Diary Of Dreams, Diorama and Pulcher Femina and also reminds me here and there of Deine Lakaien and that other greek act, Genetic Variation. The album holds several tracks that should do well in clubs (not because they are full of beats but because they are damn well written with hooks allover) and compilations like "Play with me","House of Sex","Quasi Stellar II - Give me wings","The end" (with its sci-fi choir arrangements) and the great "As I fall" that both could be club bombs. You can expect this album to hit the streets late 2004, early 2005. Grab it, you won't be disappointed. (BVI : 8/10) BVI

BOYD RICE/NON

Terra incognita: ambient works 1975 present • (cd Mute records Limited)

I personally think that Boyd Rice aka Non has been always one of the most extreme signatures on Mute! I personally remember Non as one of the pioneers of industrial movement, which years later became known under the label of noise! This artist has been one of the first to manipulate with sounds, creating harsh noise vibes and loud walls of sound blasts. He for sure belongs in the list of artists together with Throbbing Gristle, Einsturzende Neubauten, Z'ev, Monte Cazzaza etc... This album is an interesting 'back to the past', featuring a kind of commemoration of B. Rice's work all over the years. This is a retrospective of nearly 30 years of devotion and involvement! It was a while ago I've listened to Non, but I now realize he was also one of the pioneers in ambient stuff. The main point I reproach to Non is his lack of elaboration, sometimes like losing himself in a wide ocean of monotony and repetitive structures. I here got some pleasure to re-discover a track like "A taste of blood" from the essential "Blood and flames"-lp. Next to this noise approach, we still get softer and more 'accessible'-pieces like the opening cut entitled "Solitude". The last track entitled "The fountain of fortune" is another cool piece extract of the "Children of the black sun"-album released in 2001. I here like the cracklings and the kind of heavenly chorus sound in the background. This is an interesting way to discover some main tracks extract of the discography of Boyd Rice! (DP:6)DP.

CARTER TUTTI

Cabal • (cd CTI)

Carter Tutti is of course the famous English duo Chris Carter and Cosey Fanni Tutti. They simply change a bit their name, but their particular electronic style remains intact! I've been always a disciple of their electronic expression, combining an electronic coldness with some sensual vocals. After all these years of involvement, which also includes their efforts in the legendary Throbbing Gristle project, this new album still sounds surprising. The electronic structures remain extremely frozen and driven by low tempo rhythms while a lot of experimental ideas are constantly running through their work. A few songs contain the unavoidable cold and sensual touch of vocalist Tutti. Her voice is still as emblematic and poignant as in the early 80s. In my opinion, she remains one of the biggest mysteries in history of electronic music. Musically speaking, Chris and Cosey have been always created a very own sound, far away from any established standards. "Cabal" remains their style although they inject some modernism by dub atmospheres and hypnotic impressions. Tracks like "The streets of London fields","Museum of sleep" and the definitely icy sounding "Unreality II" confirm their status of electronic pioneers. The use of the trumpet often reinforces the coldness of their work, like symbolizing their own perception of reality... their own cabal! www.cartertutti.com (DP:7/8)DP.

CASUALTY PARK

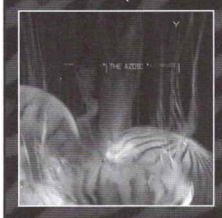
Executive flesh • (CD Cyberdelia)

When I bought Casualty Park's very first release, the now obscure, "The replica's chair" MCD, back in 1992, I found the EP between the releases of Depeche Mode. It was obvious with the drums that sounded like they were taken from the "Policy of truth" song. Visually it was all Japan what you could think of even with Martin Birke looking like David Sylvian. Over the years the band released a couple of albums on rather obscure labels before landing on the Greek Cyberdelia Records. The main ingredients remain piano, midi guitar and drum patterns that always bring the song elsewhere than where you would expect it to go. As such I always had the impression that the band almost tried to avoid bringing electropop, though, don't mistake, you still get pop songs. Also on this release, that gathers material from between 2001 and 2003, the band is almost searching different songs within one song. So if you are after easy electropop, you are on the wrong address, instead if you like a blend between Japan and early avant garde electropop then this might be for you. Note that on "The

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 02

THE AZOIC

Illuminate • (cd Infacted Recordings)



After 2 albums and the "Conflict"-maxi on Nilaihah Records, the American duo of The Azoic signed to Infacted Recordings. The "Forward + Conflict"-debut release has been an amazing debut on the European market and here already comes the next chapter, which is a new full length. Kristy Venrick and Steve Laskarides go on to explore the wide fields of progressive EBM. The Azoic definitely belongs to the new generation of body music, assembling fresh, technobody hybrid bleeps driven by beating bass drums, carrying choruses and talented vocal parts by K. Venrick. The debut cut entitled "Let me tell you something" perfectly holds on the style of their previous work. It's an elaborated and achieved opening song! The next 2 pieces (cf. "Going under" and "The one") are holding on the same ingredients of modern body vibes. The last song is a bit more powerful and accentuated by the harsher male backing vocals. I didn't really expect to find their absolute success song "Conflict" on this album again. As "Conflict" didn't appear on any full length for so far, it's probably quite logic so you don't hear me complain! This song remains an absolute topper, getting all essential substances for a club killer! It's powerful, danceable, catchy and easy reminding while the lyrics are just intriguing. The "Carve into you [edit 2003]" is another familiar track, you maybe know from the "Forward" album and the "Forward + conflict"-release on Infacted as well. It's one more song towards progression, featuring irresistible refreshing bleeps and build up with a sad sounding melody. If you're more into hypnotic acid vibes, "Truth" is another worth to listen. K. Venrick here also explores the capacities of her voice and the less I can say, is that she's a real talented singer with a sensual timber of voice. Another attention gabber is the "Eternal"-song, which sounds a bit more into the style of Apoptygma Berzerk. There's a typical body bass line running through this song while I still like the kind of vocoder effect on the male vocals. Last, but not least there's the familiar "Obsession"-song, which has been already covered by dive and Kirkian Camera. Well, the adaptation of The Azoic sounds definitely cool. It remains a slow cut, but written by giant electronic tones and clear male and female vocals. The Azoic just evolved towards maturity, dealing with the future sound of EBM. They're definitely one of my absolute favorite bands of the moment! (DP:8/9)DP.

Game" I discovered a sample from Recoil's "Faithhealer" that is repeated twice in the first seconds. It indicates for sure that the band has a soft heart for the master of electrosound, Alan Wilder. (BVI : 7/10) BVI

CHAMBER

Solitude • (dcd Trisol)

The new album of Chamber is really a worth to listen! First you get the album with the new songs, which are again built up by acoustic instruments. The neo-classical style of this combo has been once again conceived with knowledge and delicacy! Just like on the previous releases, several guests joined in. Among them we find back names like Anke Hachfeld (Mila Mar), Syrah (Qntal), ASP, Alea (Saltatio Mortis) etc.. The gentle and relaxing ballads are again easy to listen while a few cuts are more like entering into reverie. It's just a pity that I don't really find back any track emerging from the tracklist. I've a little preference for songs like the wafting "Moonchild", the gentle "Torn" and the melodious "Desire and ruin". The 2nd disc is a quite original concept! Just imagine chamber doing some cover versions. Well, it seems that they usually play several cover songs during their shows, but this an excellent way to get them on disc. Among the 8 covers, there's the surprising "Temple of love" from the Sisters Of Mercy. It sounds a bit strange to hear this hard guitar-wave piece performed in an acoustic way, but it's quite pleasant! The most surprising cover remains Rammstein's "Engel". If you know the original power of this song, you'll be for sure surprised to hear the Chamber version! My favorite piece is the remarkable "Wild roses" of N. Cave and K. Minogue. It sounds like the right song to perform by the Chamber. Chamber remains an original combo and that's probably the main explanation to their increasing success in the gothic scene! (DP:7)DP.

CHEMLAB

Oxidizer • (cd Invisible)

Not so much a hiatus as a revision, Jared Louche reformed his Chemlab project in 2003 as the sole original member. With Oxidizer, their guitar-heavy industrial rock sound is back, with music largely provided by members of the sonically similar band, Acumen Nation. The trademark sound of Chemlab is still present despite the musician switch, but this disc focuses more on straightforward rock rather than punk electronics. "Monkey God" is a chugging number that returns Jared and his lyrical gymnastics with his allusions to cyberpunk and drugs right back to his glory days. "White Room Black Eye" and "Binary Nation" veer closer to computer influences; with funky drum programming and abrasively choppy power cords, they manage to retain the frenetic. "Force Quit" diverges from the racing fury, and delivers a languorous, smoky haze that approaches gothic rock without quite directly stepping into the category. Quieter still is "Queen of the Diode", which strips away the guitars to present quiet drum n' bass, as Jared waxes poetic about his electronic addictions. Some will certainly be disappointed with Chemlab's venture into more mainstream friendly territories, but Oxidizer is still unmistakably them. This new incarnation may be a trifle less electronic, but it is still distinctly Chemlab, and should please some of their famished fan base. (VM:5/6) Vlad M.

CINEMA STRANGE

A cinema strange Ten-Year anniversary novelty product • (cd Trisol)

The title of the album doesn't leave us any shadow about the purpose and concept of this album. We're here celebrating the 10th anniversary of this particular band. Well, they sound particular to me for the way they constantly move in between gothic and punk music. CS has reworked some songs extract of their original ep from 1994. The new versions have been released together with the original mixes, just to compare and maybe realize the evolution in sound and influences. I personally appreciated the versions of 10 years ago for their strong punk inspiration. Among the new versions, I personally like the "Sadist..."-track and "Agent X-ray" isn't bad at all! The only point that hurts me is the sharp female vocals, which starts to irritate me after a while. The reworked mixes are more into traditional dark wave style. The guitar play is really cool, but I can't get away from the idea that it's all rather out of time! (DP:5)DP.

CLIENT

City • (cd Toast Hawaii/Mute Records Limited)

After the debut-cd simply entitled "Client" here comes one year later the next full-length assault of this English synth-pop project. Andy Fletcher remains the hidden force of this project, being their executive producer (as their name his job), but the question is all to know if he's really responsible for the final sound of the band. "City" sounds for sure definitely 80s minded, like moving back to the first steps of the synth-pop music. The main difference is the high-tech sound and crystal clear production work! Musically speaking we get a pleasant and quite personal production, which doesn't sound like an emulation of Depeche Mode or any other band! The album opens with the new single cut entitled "Radio". It's an excellent beginner combining the sweet analogue pop style of the 80s with the sterile female vocals. I like this non-emotional female way of singing, which of course has been another trademark of the 80s pop movement. The next pieces "Come on" and "Overdrive" remains for sure in the 80s-vein while accentuating damned efficient dry bass lines. "Overdrive" sounds less inspired although it's an important cut for the additional vocals by Martin Gore! Well, that brings me to mention the presence of several other guest vocalists like Carl Barât, Peter Doherty and Joe Wilson. It's just that all the songs with guest-vocalists aren't my personal favorites. I definitely prefer the "In it for the money"-cut, which remains my personal Client favorite for so far. I already enjoyed the clip, but it here confirms all the potential! It's a damned efficient wink to the 80s although quite elaborated. Other attention grabbers are the more melodious and OMD-like "One day at a time" and the quiet, but sensual "the chill of October". And if you aren't still convinced that the roots of Client are 80s-minded, the "Don't call me baby"-song will take all your last doubts away! This is nothing like electro clash, but simply damned efficient old electro-pop made after the millennium... although I personally expected a little bit more! (DP:7/8)DP.

CONCISE

Pure • (cd Wycombe Music)

This small German label has already surprised us with some cool synth-pop bands and Concise is only one more. The band has been set up by Christian Grass (who's still running Wycombe Music) and female singer Katrin Segert. The sound often made me think to The Dust Of Basement, but in an explicit pop way. There's the same kind of quiet and smooth electronic pop sound full of wafting atmospheres. Songs like "Renunciation", "Ultimate" and "Aim" are excellent components of

this delicate pop approach. In a totally different way there's the more experimental minded "Unique" with some particular guitar effects, which come from the Chapman-sick. My personal cut comes closer at the end with the remarkable "Surface"-song. It reminds me to the recent years of Everything But The Girl and I consider this link as a real reference! There's a similar groovy mood combined with an excellent sensual dance rhythmic. Concise seems to prove this way that they've different sides and angles of composing electronics. I still like the sober artwork of the album, which in a way fits to their delicate approach of writing! A promising production! www.wycombemusic.de (DP:7)DP.

CONETIK

Carbon elektriq • (cd Conetik/Angel Productions)

I think we already introduced you to this young Norwegian synth-pop group. Here comes their debut-cd, which sounds like revealing 2 faces! First there's a kind of common synth-pop sound, which has been built up around carrying melodious lines and quiet danceable vibes. You maybe already discovered the "Dead end"-song (on a previous demo-Mcd), which is a very good component of their work. Another interesting piece is the definitely sensual "Elektronova". It reminds me now and than to the best parts of the latest Kylie Minogue (think to "Slow") sound. We also get a cover version of the famous "Heart"-track of the Pet Shop Boys! Next, there's a heavier and more club-side. Just pay some attention for songs like "Superfluous", the excellent "Ghost song" and the groovy inspired "Turmoil", which are just brilliant extracts of modern synth-pop. I especially noticed the kind of breakbeat rhythmic, which works well on these heavier pop parts. This is a very acceptable debut! www.conetik.com (DP:6/7)DP.

COSEY FANNI TUTTI

EAR4 'Selflessness' • (cd CTI)

This is the 3rd solo-album of Cosey Fan Tutti and a very conceptual approach of music. "Ear4" evokes the sensations experienced by Cosey during the Disneyland "Selflessness" performance of 5/2 2002 in California. The original sound recording from that performance is the primary source of the sounds from which "Ear4" has been created. We get in total 4 pieces for a playing time of more than 78'. The style can be simply described as ambient. It's a kind of soundtrack without much diversity. It sounds a bit ghost-like with waves of humming sounds that come and go like ebb and flow. I know and than perceive some human voices, which are like lost in distant galaxies. C.F. Tutti realized a kind of unreal sound universe, but which can't unfortunately seduce me at any moment. It's definitely stagnating in a state of monotony! www.coseyfannitutti.com (DP:3)DP.

CRACK OF DAWN

Dawn addict • (cd Equilibre Music)

Hailing from Paris, the COD-members have already played in different previous bands. You can easily recognize that this isn't just a new band, but that the members already gained some experience! "Dawn addict" sounds like the mix between good-old punk influences and gothic rock. I especially like the way of singing, which sounds like spooky whispers. You don't exactly expect this way of singing on this genre, but it works perfect, like making the originality of the band! Musically speaking, COD can't be seen as innovators, but their sound is pretty enjoyable! I like the dark bass lines and guitar outbursts resulting in some cool cuts like "Porn Junkie", the more into gothic like "Gothic party" and "Supermarket song". They also took us by surprise through the cover of U2's "Pride in the name of love". This is an excellent cover version including some sexy female backings. I've to recognize that this style isn't exactly my cup of tea although it was pretty exciting discovering this debut-cd! www.focusion.de (DP:7)DP.

THE CRÜXSHADOWS

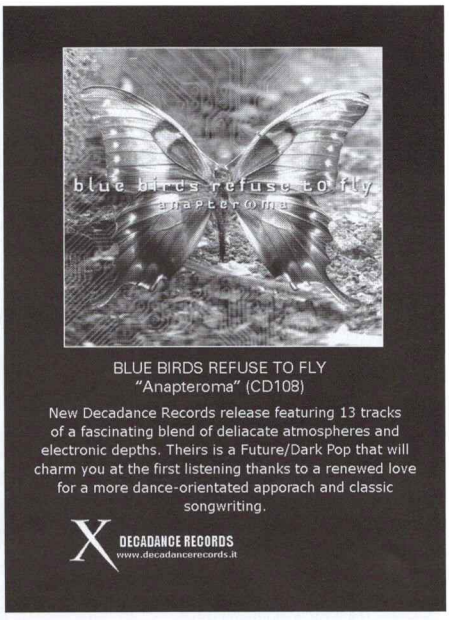
Fortress in Flames • (cd Dancing Ferret)

Fortress in Flames is the remix companion to last year's Ethernaut, with a three new pieces as a bonus. The collective pool of artists who contribute their talent is impressively broad, ranging from medieval folk to club-friendly synthpop. Subway to Sally is responsible for the medieval contribution – a truly stunning take on the hit, "Winterborn". The dance elements, as well as its stabbing guitar riffs, have been stripped away. Instead, Rogue's voice has been emblazoned across a mass of bagpipes, deep cathedral choral tones, and bracing strings. Ego Likeness also transmogrifies "Cassandra" into quite a different animal, as Donna Lynch sings in a duet with Rogue, with a stunning shimmer of guitar fuzz behind the chorus that cuts through the electronics and violin of the verses. Clan of Xymox, Razed in Black, and Iris all deliver driving club mixes, with emphasis placed on the electronic trance elements. Of those that chose to follow this path, I enjoyed Absurd Mind's version of "Citadel" the most. Vaguely akin to the electro-industrial organic grooves of older Project Pitchfork, this piece begins alien clockwork heartbeat, before halfway through smoothly and succinctly weaving in gripping EBM dance elements. The new tracks are also quite engaging – in particular the guitar-techno dirge of "Dragonfly", and the strained violin downpour of the rainy "Fortress (Eyes to Heaven). Some of the more straightforward electronic mixes do lack a bit of personality and depth, but the successes here certainly outweigh the predictable. (VM:7) Vlad M.

DEPECHE MODE

Devotional • (2DVD Mute/EMI)

It was about time.... Finally after the cult live video 101, we also get to see "Devotional" released on DVD. Finally because as good as 101 is, "Devotional" is more up to date concerning the band's sound nowadays and it can be considered as one of the best live videos made ever, visually speaking, of one of the biggest indie acts around. Filmed by Anton Corbijn it shows an impressive view on the stadium band that struggles itself through its most difficult period in existence at that time. The tour left the band wrecked, Dave Gahan nearly died of drug over doses while Alan Wilder decided that the whole circus was no longer worth it. Martin Gore grabbed the booze and Andy Fletcher was close to a nerve breakdown. But was it worth it? I'm inclined to say yes as it offers a very intriguing live coverage. As one would expect the DVD version holds also several extras. Unfortunately not all of these have undergone the same image and sound treatment as the concert film itself... The promo video of "Condemnation" for example clearly shows a serious audio problem (all 's' sounds are more like 'ssshhhhht') which was not there in the 2DVD "Depeche Mode - The Videos 86-98". Also, the MTV rock documentary added seems to be pulled form a video and not from a digital source considering the stripes rolling over the screen, the sound as well holds hizz here and there. But then again there are lovely extra's that make it all worthwhile such as the omitted live parts that were part of the "Devotional" laser disc, "Halo" and "Policy of Truth", the live projections, each time with the live music added and for those that really missed out on them, scans of the tour program. All in all a purchase that is more than worth it, just a pity that some major mistakes have slipped into this release. (BVI : 9) BVI



BLUE BIRDS REFUSE TO FLY
"Anapteroma" (CD108)
New Decadance Records release featuring 13 tracks of a fascinating blend of deliacate atmospheres and electronic depths. Theirs is a Future/Dark Pop that will charm you at the first listening thanks to a renewed love for a more dance-orientated apporach and classic songwriting.
DECADANCE RECORDS
www.decadancerecords.it

DIARY OF DREAMS

Giftraum • (mcd Accession Records)

Only one year after the release of "Dream Collector", this is the return of Diary of Dreams. Adrian Hates offers us a first single out of his new forthcoming album "Nigredo". "Giftraum" marks the comeback of a more emotional sound, also more worked... all the characteristics that were missing from their last records. The title track is present two times here under the form of a "Skinner mix" and a well-named "Classical version". Two bonus tracks fill also this good maxi cd. Let's wait for the album now. (CX:7/8 TSF:8/9) CX.

DIE PERLEN

Gedankenzüge • (mcd Housemaster Records)

DP is Katja Heller and Ferdinand Steinbart (from Drunkness). After having released several acceptable demos, they now finally decided to release their official debut as a mcd. The sound of DP remains faithful to their previous work, which means a kind of happy danceable electronic music that looks back to the 80s. The band sounds in the line of the German electronic scene we've been used to hear in the 80s and 90s. There's this kind of cold melodious electronic sound recov-

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 03

DELERIUM

The best of • (cd Nettwerk Productions)

After an amazing number of releases and the growing international success since the "Silence"-hit song, Delerium became like a new star! We can't no longer speak about underground music and dark sounds and since their latest full length "Chimera", they even became a kind of traditional pop formation. That's probably the reason why this "best of" became a quite selective piece, avoiding digging into the early years of the band. We only get some extracts of the past 4 albums ("Semantic spaces", "Karma", "Poem" and "Chimera"). We of course can consider the "Reflections 2"-album released in 1995 on Dossier Records as a "best of" of their debut period, but I sincerely regret the total absence of this period now that Delerium became that famous! I stop complaining here because "The best of" is a real great release, featuring several of their best songs from the past 10 years! It's all about personal taste and feeling, but I would like to mention "Remembrance" as one of my absolute favorites and extract of the fabulous "Karma"-cd. From the same period, the unavoidable "Silence" remains the uncontestable master track, the piece that propelled Delerium to the absolute top! From the "Semantic spaces"-album, we get the sensual and Enigma-like "Flowers become screens" and "Incantation" songs. This album became a milestone in the career of Delerium. They here evolved from pure darkness to sensual rhythms and heavenly trance like chants. The "Poem"-album was already like losing a bit of the magic effect, but the "Terra firma" is for sure an excellent cut from this period. From the "Chimera"-cd I would like to mention "Truly" as one of its best exponents. It sounds a bit harder and more into dance, but this is not the original album version, but the "Wise Buddah Radio Edit". The "After all" and "Run for it"-songs are cool, but definitely belonging to the newer and latest period of Bill Leeb and his acolytes. Last, but not least, we still get 2 previously unreleased songs. First there's the amazing "Paris"-cut. This is a song in the old and sensual tradition of Delerium while featuring French female vocals. The "You & I"-cut sounds different, like less inspired sweet pop music although it's a little bonus for the purpose of this release. Last, but not least, we still get a devastating "Above & Beyond's 21st Century Remix" of "Silence"! This album is an excellent idea as a gift or a very good surprise to put under your Christmas tree! (DP:8/9)DP.

ered by female and male vocal parts, which are now sung in German and than in English. The opening song "Puls der Zeit" is an excellent opener while "We hate the 80'ies" is another cool cut. This last song is full of humor, like being meant to laugh with the 80s while it becomes clear for everyone that this is their main source of inspiration. The "Blue screen horror" and "Une weiter..." For all those who know DP, this mini-cd will deliver you no big surprises, but it remains extremely enjoyable stuff! www.dieperlen.de (DP:6/7)DP.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR

XRV • (Mcd A Different Drum)

The first time I saw the name of TDOL, I thought it was a neo-folk band, but ADD is more oriented synthpop than neo-folk. So, TDOL is well a modern synthpop band with an evident talent of writing catchy melodies like De/Vision did as his height. The main track in his original version is simply beautiful. The talented Nevarakka made of this mid-tempo track an upbeat version more club oriented with addition of trance elements, excellent. The "Upstairs at Eric's mix" is in my opinion less attractive, more martial but doesn't bring anything special to the original version; the two other remixes present on this ep are also less impressive. Apart the original version and the four remix versions; we also found two remix of "Vinyl Bliss" taken from their '97 album "Belief". I'm waiting impatiently for their new album. (PF:7)PF.

DISPLACER

Arroyo • (cd M-Tronic)

After the successful debut-cd "Moon_phase", Michael Morton aka Displacer launches his next release entitled "Arroyo". The album has been initially influenced by a travel through Mexico, somewhere in a part where a flood devastated the beauty of nature some years ago now. Musically speaking this promising Canadian artist accentuated the ambient side of his work while recovering the space atmospheres with low triphop rhythms. I can't really imagine a devastated land when discovering the magic of "Arroyo", but that's not the point here! Displacer remains faithful to his strong debut, but evolves into more refined composition fields. The "Disconnected"-piece is a very good illustration of this evolution towards experience and growing maturity, featuring guest vocalist, Victoria Lloyd (of Claire Voyant) on vocals. She adds a sensual touch although a bit spooky as well! I just regret that this is the only song with vocals, but it's also the 1st time that M. Morton experiences with a singer. The next piece entitled "Toy collector" brings us back to the 'decomposed' style, which was more present on "Moon_phase", but that never falls down into pure experimental and cheap improvisations. Displacer literally excels in a style that remains too often dark, distorted and/or purely ambient. M. Morton reworks all these ingredients in a very personal and elaborated writing. Several other pieces like "Down", "Artificial living" and "Fueled" show and confirm the potential of this young talented artist. The last tracks are remixes by O2, Dither (realizing an interesting slow approach of "Arroyo") and Flint Glass (metamorphosing "Fueled" in a heavier and more bombastic outburst). Displacer did much more than simply confirming his potential; this project simply excels in a style than suffers from stagnation and déjà-vu! (DP:7)DP.

DITHER

Amek • (cd M-Tronic)

This seems to be the 5th album of this French solo-project! After the excellent "Urei" and "Summit"-albums, "Amek" moves into an explicit experimental approach. Autechre being one of the absolute sources of inspiration, Dither has always liked to experience with broken beats and decomposed structures. "Amek" simply excels in the genre, reaching a pronounced minimal approach. I still find back the numerous ambient-space influences and the dark moods on tracks "8" and "10". Dither again avoids titles, but simply named the tracks from 1 'til 10. That's rather strange, but it perfectly fits into the musical direction of this artist. My favorite cut is track "5", where he reinforced the global mood by some dark and mysterious parts and lots of effects. It all remains bizarre and decomposed, but it's still fascinating to listen to. Dither used an amazing wealth of sounds, moving from scratches to multiple sound waves and from dark moods to crystalline tunes. Dither remains a strange sonic wizard, but definitely an established and recognized artist on M-Tronic! (DP:6)DP.

DUBOK

Dense • (EPCD Self-released)

Two years after their last album, "Technicolor", Dubok release their much-delayed single as a free download on their website: www.dubok.net. The EP kicks off with the original mix of Dense. This is a mature and moody piece of refined electronic music with excellent vocodered vocals bubbling over light break-beats. "Dense" is backed up by seven remixes by artists like Haujobb, Terrorfakt and Croc Shop. Haujobb turn in a chilled electro mix that doesn't do justice to the original despite being an imaginative overhaul. Interface hand in a superior club mix. PTI and The Aggression both radically rework the song with great results with PTI focusing on the bouncier side of the synthwork while The Aggression accentuates its distortion. The other original track here is Dubok's cover of Duran Duran's "Rio". This is a straight cover that, while enjoyable, provides no further insight into Dubok's musical world. A compelling Haujobbesque mix of "High in Columbia" by Sub-Divide rounds off the EP. Having not really followed Dubok's progression since 2000, this EP is a great introduction as they prepare to release their new album "Shiver". If this is what Dubok were producing two years ago, the new album should be a real treat. (CMF:7/8) CMF

THE DUST OF BASEMENT

Awakening The Oceans • (cd Trisol)

If I'm not wrong, this is the second album of The Dust of Basement with their new singer. Peer Lebrecht, who is also responsible for the lyrics, and has his tone not too far from the one of Volker "Toy" Lutz. This new combination between Birgitta and him sounds more harmonious to me than with the former male singers. On a musical point of view, the sound is always so pure with an amazing work of production. The dramatic and the melancholic senses are also more present with this record. Let's add that the first limited edition will appear as a double digipack CD including a 16 pages booklet and a bonus disc with remixes and songs from their side projects, Calan.dra and Patenbrigade: Wolff. (CX:7) CX.

DUUSTER

Habitat • (cd M-Tronic)

You maybe discover Duuster on the "Chemical elements"-album, which is collaboration between duster and Ch District. Hailing from The Netherlands, Duuster now delivers his official solo-debut. We're like visiting a complex laboratory of sounds, which is often easy to recognize by the

decomposed character of the structures. Now and than he recovers his compositions with harder big beats (cf. "Amand – Offset" and "Amand – Arc"), but mostly prefers to concentrate on the construction of ambient moods. (cf. "Amand – Set.O" and "Het Freudvliegje"). One of my personal favorite tracks is the "Trosje – Daisy deci", which besides the decomposed rhythmic and dark atmosphere features a kind of spoken words lost in a deep, dense fog. But the best is yet to come... however it's a remix made by Funckarma. The mix of "Duuster en donker" sounds quite elaborated and more linear in the beats. There's a kind of coldness that reminds me to Haujobb. The last piece is the "Emotional Joystick mix" of "Bossa Nueva", but that's rather forgettable. It's far away from being the best release I've heard on M-Tronik, but you'll find here your usual doses of originality in experimentalism! (DP:6)DP.

THE ECHOING GREEN

The story of our lives • (Mcd A Different Drum)

This maxi features 5 remixes of the title-song! I personally like the different approach in style and influences of all the bands, moving from real great versions to less inspired ones. I'm afraid the opening cut by Joey Belville in person belongs to the 2nd category. This mix goes on for more than 8 minutes, which next to the typical synth-pop style of EG, features a tune in the purest tradition of Depeche Mode. Well, to be honest it even sounds close to a cloning of Depeche Mode. Echo Image and the excellent Syrian transpose the song into pure danceable sensation, adding much more bleeps and dynamism. Both pieces are definitely more original and away from the synth-pop standards! Virtual Server did it in another danceable way as well, which already results in a cool dance piece. Tecnoman SF from Argentina has been the last band to remix this song, but this version is less attractive. Among the other songs, we get the new "Seaside"-cut, which is sweet and tender pop music, but definitely not their best cut ever! Than there's a surprising, but real cool cover of Wolfsheim very famous "The sparrows & the nightingales". I was a bit afraid of hearing this cover, but it's a damned good version with harder vocals and excellent dance vibes. The 3 songs left are all remixes. There's Sequencia remixing "Winter", the Variant remixing "Blind" and finally Random Access Memory remixing "Fall awake". I personally prefer the remix of Sequencia, but these songs aren't the main attraction of this record! I've already heard better releases of the Echoing Green! (DP:6/7)DP.

EGO LIKENESS

Water for the Dead • (cd Dancing Ferret)

Water for the Dead is a sublime work of contrast; it is rife with chugging anthems, while traces of the subtle trip-hop ambience of their debut are still discernable. Electronics intermesh seamlessly with walls of guitar, as its heaviest moments integrate perfectly with the quiet heartaches. The title track kick starts the album with a storm of pure gothic rock. The song is thick with racing guitars, a drumbeat that insists you dance, and introduces you to Donna Lynch's stunning vocals. "16 Miles" continues in its urgent stride, accompanied by a steady bass-snare beat, and choppy metal riffs during the verses that burst forth with energy at the chorus. "Hurricane" and "The Breach" are also quite powerful, both implementing some electronics into their dance tapestries. Ego Likeness' skill in forging the dark ballads is also exemplary. "Above the Soil (Isabel's Version)" is a melancholic fog with waves of fuzzy guitar that ebbs and flows in the currents of a somber piano melody. Steve Archer's downtrodden half-spoken voice interplays here in a duet with Donna's foreboding tones. Pieces like "Axis" and "Wolves" are stark tracks that feature Donna's disheartened voice against shattered folk pianos, with a dark ambience pervading the background. Lastly, there is the epic "Traveling Son". A seven-minute opus, it lures one in with haunting echoes of guitar and trip-hop rhythms as it slowly builds into a tumultuous storm of distortion, epic drumming, ebbing once more into a sultry vocal haze before launching towards a climactic finale. Water to the Dead proves to be well rounded and stunningly diverse from beginning to end - an essential recording for fans of gothic rock. (VM:8/9) Vlad M.

ENDANGER

Addicted to the masses • (cd Infacted Recordings)

Endanger is one of these projects who never totally convinced me. Their new album maybe isn't the long awaited 'redemption' although it is their best opus to date! They now seem to explore 2 sides of synth-pop, starting with a powerful and danceable side, which comes pretty close to Syrian. There's a similar techno influenced approach in the carrying tunes of songs like "Give me a reason", "Like heaven", "Addicted to the masses" and "Victory of the heart". Even if these songs are pretty similar, they sound like the right club food! The next side is a bit softer although driven by pure club kicks. I here appreciate tracks like "I count on you", "I come undone" and "Spürst Du's nicht". Track 11 sounds like a funny threshold, the place where you're moving from the regular album into the antechamber of remixes. This isn't exactly a song, but a kind of intermezzo entitled "Enter the remixzone". We next get a cool "Clubmix" of "Give me a reason" and 4 remixes of this same song. The 'remixers' are real interesting artists. So we get one of the absolute masters of futurepop aka Assemblage 23, which did an excellent job. I still like the mix of Hecq, which is more experimental, but it shows an interesting transposition in sound and style. Massiv In Mensch remains a great remix-band, but they here go a little bit over the top, like losing themselves in a childish play. The Namnambulu remix can't convince me, but it all brings an interesting variety of ideas... just like the entire album! (DP:7 TSF:8) DP.

ENDRAUM

Traumstaub • (CD Weisser Herbst/Trisol)

Endraum's 14th release, "Traumstaub," delivers lush, layered textures and melodies that enshroud the listener in melancholy romanticism. The release contains 15 complex and mostly electronic tracks that possess an understated quiet strength and beauty. Limited to 2,000 copies worldwide, the CD comes in a gatefold digipack and includes a 40-minute DVD film "Nachtblende," featuring video representation of several previously released Endraum tracks, as well as a 12-page booklet. As fans have come to expect, Endraum expertly melds several forms of artistic expression as they present their work to their audience. This release is highly recommended for those who appreciate art in its many mediums and enjoy an introspective, thought provoking album. On Weisser Herbst/Trisol. For further info, visit endram.net.(j:8/9) jules.

ESOTERICA

In obscura • (cd Elusive Recordings)

This must be one of the very first times we get in touch with a label hailing from Ireland while the band they here present is quite interesting. Felix Rex aka Esoterica deals with a particular style of music, which is hard to define precisely. There's a kind of vague tribal influence merged together with bewitching Asian moods. It creates a kind of mystical entity that has been intermixed with some sensual slow triphop rhythms. That's what we experience when discovering songs like "All things connected", "Fire it up" showing an interesting evolution in the complexity of the structure, "Lifes in motion" and the definitely more tribal-minded "From here to there". Another attention grabber is the "Chasing the waves"-track, which moves on the border of lounge music. Esoterica doesn't sound as being the newest tribal revelation, but features a pleasant album. That sounds promising for the future and this young label as well! www.elusiverecordings.com (DP:6/7)DP.

FEKTION FEKLER

Into the sun • (CD promo Black Flames)

First of all, know that the official and commercially available release of the new Fektion Fekler album will be a double CD splitting the material in two, one with the harder side of the band, and one with the softer, more acoustic side of the band. A daring choice as many labels would not even take the risk releasing material that is not targeted at the dance floor. But we have to do it with a 10-track promo CD that shows Fektion Fekler from its danceable side. And you really get everything on here, the complete tricbox that the Fekler boys have in mind for you, from dance to guitars, it's all present here. For the record, I have always like the band's output, whether it was under their name or that of Moksha that gathered older material from the band. An FF track is very recognizable, meaning they definitely have a style that is their own, drums, sounds, vocals, it's an FF trademark, and a damn good one as well. Check this album out for sure and have a listen to the use of samples and vocals that will leave you intrigued for a while. (BVI : 7/10) BVI

FLINTOLOGY

Testimon(e)y • (cd Urgence Disk Records)

After Weatherman, this is another Belgian band that has signed on the Swiss Urgence Disk Records. Flintology is Philip Ricquier I just discovered and from who I can't give you any further background. Musically speaking, Flintology deals with harder guitar work, which isn't really setting the world alight. Before reading the info sheet I even thought that this was a Swiss band. It all sounds a bit like One Alone, a Swiss band I discovered some years ago now. The "Change"-song even reminds me to Stefan Eicher in person... probably together with Young Gods, the biggest export product of the Swiss underground scene. "Trestimon(e)y" sounds definitely powerful, but

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 04

ASSEMBLAGE 23

Storm • (cd accession records/Metropolis)

Over the years, Tom Shear of A23 has earned the reputation for being one of the most prolific, quality-driven purveyor of the electro underground. His latest masterpiece, Storm, treads the same dark waters as his previous efforts. Adept at creating complex, multi-faceted rhythms and beats while composing eloquent melodramas chock full of scorn and the weaknesses of the human condition, nobody does it better. The new album kicks up the tempo a few notches, focusing predominantly on club-perfect dance anthems for the rivethead sadist. However, I've always found the slower, more introspective pieces to be much more fulfilling, such as "Tried" and "Cocoon" from previous releases. The emotive pain and heartbreak dealing with deeply personal issues has always been Tom's strongpoint (see "Disappoint,") but it's somewhat lacking in the first half of 'Storm,' serving up dishes of by-the-numbers EBM fodder. The insatiable energy contained within tracks such as first single, "Let The Wind Erase Me," "Skin" and "Regret" often get upstaged by the sheer melodic genius behind "Complacent" and "You Haven't Earned It." This album is, as usual par for the A23 course, expertly produced and mixed offering a level of superiority far above contemporaries in the genre. The real kicker is the now trademark A23 surprise final track. I promise I won't crash it for you *dodges rotten tomatoes*. (DK:8/9 DP :8/9) DK.

I'm afraid this is the kind of record that will very soon go dawn in anonymity. www.flintology.be www.darksite.ch/urgences (DP:4)DP.

FORTHCOMING FIRE

In Flammen • (cd VAWS)

Nearly 5 years after their latest album (cf. "Watching Rome burn"), FF comes back with a brand-new opus. There was a time that this German band got a considerable recognition in their homeland, but I'm afraid only a few numbers of fans are still supporting them today. The sound of FF has been always based on gothic moods recovered with a kind of rock approach. "In Flammen" doesn't sound that different, but evolves more into quieter pieces. The new songs are more like ballads, but only the "Born in flames 2"-song is a bit credible. Most of the songs are really lacking the depths while the production process is simply unacceptable. It all sounds very cheap and like a low budget release, which I'm afraid is not the best way to gain some popularity back. Unfortunately for gettable! www.vaws.de (DP:3/4)DP.

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY

Vanished • (cds Synthetic Symphony)

Following up their outstanding Civilization album, the duo of Fulber and Leeb return to present its second single. While the album veered close to the romantic lushness of their work under the Delerium moniker, Vanished seems designed with their electronic-industrial fans of old in mind. In the "Illusions of Grandeur" remix of the single's namesake track, as well as in the somewhat similar "RE-entry Mix", heavy beats punctuate synthesizers in sync with metal guitar riffs. In the former, whisper traces of shimmering distorted vocals are immersed in a heavy bass stomp, with only slight fingerprints of the original's Middle Eastern influence. The latter bears more evidence of the original. With Leah Randi's vocals in duet with Bill Leeb's tinny vocoder fog, the mix culminates with some computer twitters and a touch less aggression. There are also the originals present on this single. "Stürm" drips with machismo, and is musically and lyrically similar to their last single, "Maniacal". Distorted heavy EBM and distorted techno drums recall their older sound, with elements of the new such as the return of the guitar and subtle touches of vivid warped synthesizer. Dark cyber trance is what characterizes "Disseminate", which feels somewhat like Juno Reactor or the trance period of Velvet Acid Christ. This track rides through the heavy weavings of drum machines before descending into the dark echoes and vibrations of space. Slowly, it climbs back to its mesmerizing beat as a nice conclusion. Lastly, there's "Uncivilized", which sends sonar signals into its depths before developing a bass and snare combination and the whirl of warped speech samples. This single serves as a good juxtaposition to the generally mellow Civilization, delivering diversity with its harsher end of their complex sonic art. (VM:8) VM.

GARDEN OF DELIGHT

Apocryphal moments • (cd + dvd Trisol)

While this great artistic digipak is still sold as a single album, I think you definitely need the dvd as surplus. The dvd has been recorded during a live gig at the famous "Laiterie" in Strasbourg (France). The concept of the dvd has nothing really special, but just shows you GOD on stage. We get 13 songs + 2 video clips so we can't really complain! The concert looks very sober and dark gothic minded. The style of GOD reminds once again to the glorious days of new wave and especially to bands like Sisters Of Mercy and The Mission. This band is undoubtedly one of the best emulators of the typical dark and doom sound of the 80s. The tracklist of this concert can be seen as a kind of 'best of' with some great songs like "Agony" and "Levitation" as absolute attention grabbers. The cd seems like a kind of 'rarities' that have been assembled for the purpose of the 'apocryphal moments'. GOD sounds definitely more powerful in their studio work. I've been especially amazed by the extremely powerful and hard sounding "Levitation (Idra Rabba)". The guitar play is simply brilliant, but that's just one of the characteristics of this formation. We also get 3 live songs extract of the "Wintercoffin"-live bootleg album. Next we also get the previously unreleased "Holy seat"-piece, which perfectly fits into the dark and merciless sound of the band. Last, but not least we also get a live-video version of "Dead sea scrolls", which has been shot in Belgium. This is a cool gift for the heaviest fans of the band and all lovers of the new wave! (DP:7)DP.

HAWTHORN

The murky brine • (CD Trisol)

Hawthorn is the collaboration of Tony Wakeford (Sol Invictus) and Matt Howden (Sieben) bringing dark atmospheric music. Both artists have during the last ten years produced a vast number of recordings which went down in cult album history. And with their current release "The Murky Brine", they bring a mixture that holds a consistent inclusion of percussion, piano, alternating vocals (Tony and Matt) and samples as opposed to just the usual guitar, violin, vocal arrangements. 49 minutes of absolutely essential listening for all fans of the dark folk / dark ambient genre and especially of both bands. World Serpent adepts and related will dig this. • (BVI : 7) BVI

HOCICO

Born to be (Hated) • (mcd Out of Line)

Born to be (Hated) is the single that is meant to be the precursor to Hocico's next album, Wrack and Ruin. For those familiar with the Mexican duo's brutal electro sledgehammer sound, this latest material continues the successful formula founded by the last few releases. Presented here are two versions of the title track, one exclusive song, and a remix of "Ruptura" by Apoptygma Berzerk vs. Drugwar. The centerpiece here bears all the markings of a classic Hocico single. "Born to be (Hated)" retains the intensity for which they are known; horror film snippets, macabre keys over-

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 05

ALFA MATRIX – RE:CONNECTED [1.0]

(dcd Alfa Matrix)

Alfa Matrix succeeds, in three years, what a lot have labels had only dreaming about during their entire existence: unify, in a way, the electronic alternative Belgian scene, with... firstly, the pioneers (Front 242 and their satellites, Dive, à;GRUMH, Insekt, Monolith, Sonar) and the new promising talents (Nebula H, Implant, Aiboforcen, ...) Secondly, an impressive list of amazing new discoveries that we had the chance to support thanks to their intuition and their audacity (Seize, Mnemonic, Neikka RPM, Ayria, Hungry Lucy...). Thirdly, other confirmed talents like PNE, Regenerator, Glis also fill out this impressive list of successful bands nextto a bunch of good new signings like Unter Null, Agonised By Love and especiallySero.Overdose. To celebrate thus their three years of existence, the label had the good idea to compile unreleased material from 28 of their cherished babies in a double deluxe digipack album. Don't miss the chance to take the pulse of our electronic scene, all the greater parts are here. And it's not for nothing that this compilation istayed number one in the German alternative charts for several weeks! Hundreds of DJ's can'be wrong! (CX:8 CC:9) CX.

laying rusty, brutal beats, all scathed by raspy, vitriolic lyrics. The remixed version of this song retains the aggression, but the pacing is slowed down, leaving it feeling a bit more menacing and methodical. The minimalist slant, plus the additional liquid gurgle to the vocals leaves me with a distinct Suicide Commando aftertaste. The exclusive track, "Winds of Treason", is quite stunning and makes this single worth its price. As the piece slowly unfolds amidst eerie ethereal synths, dark trance merges with relentless electro to overtake the atmosphere. Rhythmic bass interplays well here with gossamer-thin tendrils of sampled operatic vocals, and the tinny roll of the beat that pole vaults the listener into brutal metallic drum machines makes this song the best piece presented on this single. Lastly, the remix of "Ruptura" offers up a unique divergence away of Hocico's own sound. Stripping away most of EBM elements, Apop and Drugwar skilfully recreate this track into a journey of breakbeat techno, with only a stuttering keyboard loop and a vibrating stretch of the vocals reminding you of its origins. (VM:8) VM.

THE HORRORIST

Manic Panic • (2CD Out Of Line)

Oliver Chesler aka The Horrorist is no one else than that Punk that won a Depeche Mode-competition and that accompanied the band on their 101 Tour. Since then Chesler became immortal through features on the video and DVD of Depeche Mode's road/live-movie 101. Less known by the grand public is the fact that The Horrorist is one of the most requested live-acts in the Techno- and Dance-Scene. He released numerous 12" vinyls on renowned dance-labels and entered the Charts in many countries around the world especially with his hit "One Night in NYC", that sold more than 40'000 copies in Germany alone through Universal. Out since September is the double CD "Manic Panic Extended" that not only includes the "Manic Panic" album, but also gathers most of his singles and remixes, including the international hits "One Night in NYC", "Can you hear the sound" and many others, 26 tracks in total. As much mayhem was created around this project, as big is the disappointment when hearing that this material is starting to sound outdated and reminds me of the gabber house you hear in the worst cafes. Sorry, but this release cannot convince me at all, none of the tracks seem to have stand the course of time and I wonder why the so-called hits on this release actually became hits. • (BVI : 5-6) BVI

ILLUMINATE

Augen Blicke • (cd Gallery Records)

This is already the 8th album for Illuminate (if you consider the "10 x 10 Schwarz" and "10 x 10 Weiß"-albums as being one). This gothic project set up by Johannes Berthold directly seduced me by the neo-classical influences and typical gothic moods and themes while the angelic female vocals add a particular angelic touch. Illuminate became a famous and recognized gothic formation, but always got some difficulties to break though outside Germany. "Augen Blicke" doesn't really surprise and it's all a bit like the magic of this band has been lost. Illuminate goes on the same and familiar way they're now exploring for nearly 10 years, but that can't surprise any longer! It's all too predictable although the music remains well crafted. I still like the numerous piano parts and the carrying choruses, but I'm desperately in search of some innovation. Illuminate holds on their traditional way of composing and it all sounds like they'll never change! I'm sure there's still an important fan base for this kind of productions, but some progression would be suitable! (DP:6/7)DP.

INTERLACE

Master • (Mcd Dependent/Memento Materia)

Preceding their 2nd full length, the Swedish Interlace trio proposed us this maxi as an aperitif. The title-song has been mixed in 3 different versions, starting with the "Single edit". I immediately recognize the typical vocals of the band and their dark Skinny Puppy-like sound. The "Mayfly"-mix sounds quite similar but caught my attention for the dry and typical EBM bass line. I can't get away from the idea that this song isn't maybe the right choice for the purpose of a Mcd. The "Subfloor"-mix is definitely the most atypical version, but also my absolute favorite one. This mix is more into the dancefloor spirit although less representative for the work of the band. It's just groovier and the vocals have been mainly reduced to the chorus part. The "Boiler room" is the one track left. This piece sounds in the dark electro vein of Interlace and will for sure evoke some comparisons with Skinny Puppy. This is a complex cut that moves on the border of dark electro and industrial moods. Let's say that this maxi perfectly stands for what we've heard on the debut album "Innuendo" and seems to announce a promising 2nd release! (DP:6/7)DP.

INTERLACE

Imago • (cd Dependent/Memento Materia)

Just following the "Master"-maxi, comes the 2nd full length of the Swedish Interlace sensation! "Imago" starts in a heavy way by the title-song of the Mcd. Now that I've heard the "Master"-song again, I can only recognize that this is an amazing source of dark energy and powerful dance stuff. From a pure technical point of view, this song also shows the maturity in elaboration of writing. This is not the kind of song that has been composed in a hurry! "Sleep on stones" comes next and moves into heavier and bombastic impressions, like showing a kind of refined dark chaos. "Conformity" is already a new experience, which now accentuates the wealth of sounds and the damned efficient bass lines of the Interlace sound! The darkness rules over the concept of "Imago", reminding us to the unavoidable comparison with Skinny Puppy. The link with the Canadians remains, but "Imago" probably became a little bit more personal in style. After this heavy debut blasts, they curiously evolved into softer pieces. It's like they want to show us a more sphere-like side, which works on cuts like "Crystalline hush" and "Diapause". My absolute favorite piece in this genre is the amazing "Pandora", which is a bit more industrial minded through the crashes and noisier mood. I just regret that they never get back into their overwhelming debut songs. It's all about taste, but I definitely prefer their heavier and danceable side, which makes me now clearly understand why they chose the "Master"-song as maxi! Interlace stands however for complex dark electronic music and remains therefore a real fascinating item... although I prefer their debut album! (DP:7 TSF:8/9)DP.

IN THE NURSERY

A page of madness • (cd ITN Corporation)

The Humberstone twins goes on their exploration of silent movies and the fascination for soundtracks. "A page of madness" is already the 5th release in their "Optical music"-series. The new concept deals with the Japanese silent movie "A page of madness" directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa. The theme of the movie is a stunning invocation of the world viewed by the mentally ill. ITN didn't manage any effort and used some traditional Japanese instruments to release their personal soundtrack of the movie. The sound and style don't really surprise, but seem to hold on all the traditional concept of writing we've been used to with ITN. There's this typical soundtrack like music, which sounds relaxing and atmospheric till a few outbursts come to awake you. "A page out of order" is an excellent illustration of a heavier part, featuring bombastic, echoing drums in the background. The "Dancing with chaos" starts in a pure explosive way while progressively evolving into colder and elaborated noise fields. "The big lottery" caught my attention for the typical atmospheric Enigma tone and brings already some diversity to their work. This is for sure one of the most diversified albums in this series, reinforcing the attention of the listener! "A page of madness" must have been presented at some film festivals this summer. Conceptual as always and one more production in the impressive discography and career of this duo! (DP:6)DP.

IN_VOX FEAT ANDY BELL

Will I ever? • (MCD Columbia / Sony Greece)

This single, the follow up to their first single "On The Highway" (released in 2002), features a duet with Erasure singer Andy Bell. The track has been remixed by electro pioneers Marsheux as well as by the Greek - American dj/remixer/producer, Chris "The Greek" Panaghi and a few others, 6 mixes in total. Panaghi has remixed artists such as Celine Dion, Marc Anthony, Gloria Estefan and Michael Jackson to name a few but does not really impress me with his work on this single. Marsheux on the other hand did outstanding work with a radio edit and an extended mix. And I bet Erasure fans will for sure go for the 4th mix, the Marsheaux extended mix, which is very close to the sounds of Erasure and which could easily become a hit in the UK where this kind of bubble synthpop still has a market. Personally I was charmed by this edit while it is not all that extraordinary, but still it has enough power behind it to work nicely. Also notable is the 'Back to the 80's mix' which is as it says a voyage back into time with delicious 80's sounds and drums. All in all a MCD that will please all Erasure fans. • (BVI: 7/10) BVI

JOKE JAY

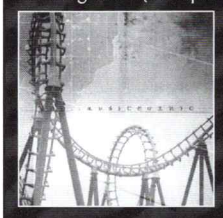
Angefixxt • (Mcd Wannsee Records)

We all know Joke Jay as long-time member of And One, living in the back of front man Steve Naghavi. He now decided to set up his own project and the less I can say after the listening of "Angefixxt"-maxi is that he goes on where And

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 06

MXD

Musicogenix • (cd Equilibre Music)



Mxd is a Swiss combo that I just heard for the very first time. After a self-released album in 1998 and the official debut release "Doping the beat" in 2000, "Musicogenix" is an incredible piece of powerful music! Before I realized where Mxd is hailing from I perceive a kind of Young Gods influence next to Junkie XL. "Musicogenix" is full of carrying guitar lines, which have been diversified by techno-minded electronic structures and bleeps. In a way, this is a kind of Young Gods after a sonic surgery. The mixture of hard guitar riffs and techno elements is simply amazing and that powerful. The "Bad boy"-song is the ultimate reference and definitely in the early style of junkie XL. But there's much more than this. From start on, Mxd excels in powerful pieces, which can remain instrumental like "Escalator" and "Extra balls", driven by furious distorted vocals like "Veloce (No song)" or simply spoken words in French like the totally hilarious and sexy "Le pire". This last piece is still one of my favorites. They here built up a gorgeous moody impression, reinforced by deep bass sounds. I get the impression that whatever they try out, it can only work and surprise in a positive way! And there's much more! The last cut entitled "Pump" is a kind of groovy parody of a famous dance track. The spirit remains extremely danceable while the guitar joins in for a kind of trance apotheosis. This is simply terrific! Another song like "Poison explosion" sounds like revealing the origin of this quartet. This is a pure crossover between Young Gods and the aggression of Swamp Terrorists. There's a fresh new breeze flowing over the Swiss continent. This band gets my total support! www.equilibremusic.com (DP:8)DP.

One stopped! "Angefixxt" stands for hard, hitting EBM reminding to the heaviest pieces of And One (where Joke was often singing on). We got the limited edition of the Mcd, containing 7 versions of the title song. The song is pure dance pleasure, revealing some merciless stumping versions like "Extended speedball" and "Diskofixxer" by JJ in person. Among the other mixes, I really get wild with the wafting feeling on the "Beatboy remix" – gefächert von Adam. I also want to mention the "Funker Vogt remix" by Gerrit Thomas, which isn't the best one that Gerrit has ever done, but it's still worth a listen. Let's now await the "Fiasko deluxe"-album, which is announced for September! This maxi already serves as a terrific appetizer! (DP:7/8)DP.

L'AME IMMORTELLE

Gezeiten • (cd Spersonic Records/GUN)

Where's the time that this famous band released their very 1st album on MOS Records. The Austrian formation became one of the uncontestable leaders of the underground scene, getting a deal with a major company. It's now just the question to know if they'll fulfil the expectations of such a giant label. Thomas Rainer and Sonja Kraushofer probably released their most accomplished release ever, getting some help of famous artists like John A. Rivers and Rhys Fulber. The FLA-member took care for the production of 6 of the11 songs. The style of this band has considerably evolved throughout the years. It's now a long time ago that they composed some dark electronics, moving towards gothic and metal fields on their previous releases. "Gezeiten" is the most achieved and mature production in the series. Sonja Kraushofer now became the uncontestable lead singer and that's a fact you can easily perceive. Her way of singing now becomes more diversified and therefore a little bit comparable to her Persephone-project. Her captivating, heavenly vocals are like accentuating the gothic and neo-classical side of L'Al. The opening piece "Es Zieht dich davon" is a very good example of what this album is all about. There's this dark gothic expression that now and than may remind to a sort of soundtrack. The more into piano sounding "5 Jahre" is another illustration of their gothic direction while "Fear" comes closer to rock stuff. The 1st real high light is the wafting "Stumme Schreie"-piece where I noticed a well-done harmony between female and male vocals. The songs produced by R. Fulber start in an amazing way and a kind of 'première' for the band. The "Gezeiten"-song simply reminds to Delerium. This is a real hot piece of music featuring sensual German vocal parts and the familiar triphop rhythmic, which is that essential for such piece of music. This for sure opens new horizons to the duo Rainer – Kraushofer. The next piece "Rain" is totally different, like moving back into the now familiar and comfortable gothic fields... although I notice a deep bass sound, which reminds me to FLA. The "Masquerade"-song is probably the hardest one of the album. The harsh vocals of Thomas are like a wink to the past. We finally end in softer and ballad-minded pieces with the dreamy "Kingdom" and the sad sounding "Ohne dich"-ballad. I personally preferred the good old electronic stuff of this band, but I've to recognize that this album is from different points of view, a great and professional piece of music! Well-done guys! (DP:7/8)DP.

LAVANTGARDE

Inside out • (CD SPR)

With Lavantgarde it seems SPR has found a decent follow-up for De/Vision, krafty tunes are mixed with very clear vocals that easily can stand the comparison with De/Vision, because that will be the band they are going to be compared with. Note the use of drums and strings and you can't honestly deny where the influence came from. As such I would not say that they are sounding new, or innovative, far from that, but sure is that they have all what it takes to become one of the big names in the footsteps of the likes of Distain!, De/Vision, Mesh or yet Iris because of their production qualities. Being the second album for the band after "Musicment", we clearly notice a progression in the use of sounds and the way the material is produced. Clarity and refinement has taken over and more emphasis is laid on the songstructures in order to get them sounding more direct. A release I can only recommend to those looking for another quality synthpop act to play dead through 11 tracks. (BVI : 8) BVI

LEAVES' EYES

Lovelorn • (CD Napalm Records/SPV)

Hm, this was a nice surprise, after being kicked out of Theatre Of Tragedy, Liv Kristine Espenaes Krull formed her new band Leaves' Eyes that holds also members of Atrocity. More than with theatre Of Tragedy, Leaves' Eyes seems to be entirely built around the vocals of Liv Kristine in songs that are extremely charming. While TOT is doing everything possible to let their public forget about the former frontwoman all seems to indicate they have lost one hell of a vocal pearl. What she achieves on Lovelorn is excellent, emotional and oh so beautiful that it makes you wonder what could be the real story behind her departure from TOT. It is indeed as she indicated herself one of if not THE best production she has ever taken part in. Forget Evanescence, Within Temptation and related and go straight after this one, recommended for sure! My favourites on this album: "Lovelorn" and "Norwegian lovesong", but the album is infested with great tracks. Or what an effect pregnancy can have on a singer's creativity combined with the musical input of spouse Alexander Krull of Atrocity... (BVI : 9) BVI

LEVINHURST

Perfect life • (CD Full Contact)

Levinhurst is none other than the newest project by ex-Cure member Lol Tolhurst and his wife Cindy Levinson. Whereas with Presence he remained closely to what The Cure did, with this project he enters the realm of electroclash and electropop, here and there enriched with guitar riffs. But long forgotten are the days Tolhurst was chasing after the Cure's sound. A wise decision as on "Perfect life" we get several tunes that are delicious to listen at such as "Let's go" or the absolutely stunning "Sandman", simply one the best tracks I heard this year. Good to know is that this release will probably also come in a remixed version, or at least some tracks will undergo a treatment so to speak. Quite obvious as this materials lends itself perfectly for remixwork thanks to Cindy's cute vocal lines. While USA distribution is being taken care of, EU distribution is not yet agreed upon, but you can already purchase the CD from www.levinhurst.com or at HYPERLINK "http://www.fullcm.com" www.fullcm.com (BVI : 7-8) BVI

LIMBO

Compendium: The light fall • (cd Cursed Land Entertainment/Masterpiece Distribution)

Set up by Gianluca Becuzzi (who has been also involved into Pankow and Kirlian Camera) in the early 80s, this 'compendium' is a very good way to visit the career of this Italian EBM pioneer. Limbo never got the reputation and fame as Pankow, but they definitely belong to the Italian legacy of EBM. All the songs have been technically reworked in mixing and mastering to celebrate this kind of 20th Limbo anniversary. From the good old times, the "Eros et Thanatos"-cut is still a credible and pleasant dark body cut. One of my all-time favorites remains the "Libido Mater Nostra"-song. I here like the sampled vocals of the pope while the music sounds like the usual body approach of Limbo. Limbo has often and voluntary cloned other formations. That's precisely what

you can experience on the "Blutfeuchttr/eume"-track where they used one of the most famous Front 242-samplings "Jesus is here". They did it another way on the "Tenebra karmica"-song where they used a sequence of the old Klinik. It sounds all a bit weird, but efficient! Another essential piece is "Red Latex Jesus", which originally was a song of Kebabtraume, but as D.Loop (one of the other members of Limbo) was a part of this other Italian EBM-combo, you can easily make the link with Limbo. You can for sure easily distinguish the newer from the older songs, but the album is a kind of compact entity between both periods! (DP:6/7)DP.

LYCOSIA

Lycosia • (cd Equilibre Music)

The French Lycosia seems to have already gained a considerable success by their 2 previous albums. 2004 seems to be a turning point in their history. The line-up of the band has changed, but the main change maybe hits the music properly! While being closer to metal genres in the past, they now evolved towards a kind of glamour gothic sound. There's a constant crossover between gothic and rock music while there's an important Eastern mood running through their work. The "Scythia"-song is an absolute pearl in the genre and I've been here deeply impressed by the mystical guitar play. Another essential piece in the same line is "Altai". The guitar parts are for sure the main force inside Lycosia. This is a guitarist who's really putting a huge dose of emotions in his play. The "Cold summer"-song is a very good illustration of his talent! We also get a bonus of 2 tracks and the "Wet remix" of "Travelling through our love" is an excellent electronic approach of the original version! This is for sure an excellent band for the lovers of gothic and guitar wave. (DP:6)DP.

MEPHISTO WALZ

Insidious • (cd Alice In...)

We've had to wait for a long time but it was worth: this new MEPHISTO WALZ album sounds like one of their best work to date. I wouldn't say that they totally changed their style but this long break in their musical career seems to have been the time for collecting a large bunch of interesting new songs. The recent Nightingale single had forecasted a brilliant return and here they are with 10 new songs (including the two cuts form the single) and a mesmerizing universe. Back at the forefront of the darkwave scene, the duet achieved splendiferous songs such as Our Flesh, Watching From The Darkest Place (on which the delicate voice of Christiana is more motional than ever) or One Less Day (a marvellous atmospheric piece reminding me of the COCTEAU TWINS at least for the music). Highly recommended and essential... (CF: 8/9) CF.

MICHIGAN

Red Dawn • (MCD Memento Materia)

A catchy new synthpop tune from Sweden generously re-crafted four times along with two additional tracks! This single proves a mature sound for Michigan, but for some audible processing of vocals. Virtual Server, a.k.a. DJ Ram, is represented first with his techno-pop remix, my favorite only to Backlash. Backlash's futuristic electro mix warrants a single of it's own! Both "Belong Together" and "Control of Me" continue with vocal oriented synthpop including guitar and heavy synths. The final remix, by Michigan adds a nice breakbeat and additional chorus absent from the radio edit. Will definitely appeal to fans of Statemachine and De/Vision. (MEM:6) MEM

MINISTRY

Houses of the Molé • (cd Sanctuary)

Ministry has returned to their adrenalised, railgun-riff roots on Molé. This is the long-awaited logical progression from their metal-industrial benchmark, Psalm 69. In fact, the themes explored there are reflected within here; while 69 was an epithet against American president George Bush, this one casts their vitriol against his son and current U.S. leader. From the operatic loop of Carl Orff's "La Fortuna", the disc rockets in to "No W". This first single is a juggernaut of anger that recollects their classic, "N.W.O.", on more than one level. "Warp City" is my particular favorite. As rollicking country metal drums roll in, the track is lead by an extended speech sample telling a tale of drunken homicide, it launches into lightning metal riffs slathered with Jourgenson's gurgling metal growl. "Waiting", "Worthless", and "Wrong" continue to lambaste the U.S. government as carry apocalyptic airs. This trio all bares traces of their older material, with samples of cannons used for a rhythm base ("Waiting") and political speech edits over dizzying speed metal stop-start riffs ("Wrong"). Differing from the usual Ministry fare is "Worm". This humid tune veers away from the frenetic pace, as a downtrodden Jourgenson surprisingly sings the chorus while fevered horns summon a desert heat. Before recording this follow-up to last year's Animositisomina, Ministry lost one of their founding members, Paul Barker. While some may be wary of Al Jourgenson forging on without his partner, they should forget such skepticism. This disc is easily the best material they have output in a decade. (VM:9) VM.

MONA MUR

Into your eye • (cd Alice In...)

Mona Mur will for sure be reminded as the project of an enigmatic female artist who collaborated with some very famous names. "Into your eye" is a unique way to re-discover the story of this band that started back in 1982 with the "Jeszcze Polska"-12". Some members of Einsturzende Neubauten like Alexander Hacke, Mark Chung and FM Einheit have been involved in the early years of MM. The music was quite dark-wave influenced, containing some extreme raw guitar parts. The opening songs are perfectly reflecting this dark experimental mood of the 80s. A few other cuts have been composed in collaboration with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, resulting in a logical orchestral direction. I can personally some of these tracks like "Mon amour" and "The man on the satellite". This compilation shows a progression in sound and ideas all over the years. While reaching the youngest period of MM, we discover a more refined sound, joining electronic fields. The "Hier im Nebel sind wir alle gleich"-song is my absolute favorite one of this anthology. I like the way of singing and the electronic structures. Another recent cut is the final song here entitled "Into your eye". There's a kind of Dead Can Dance influence hanging this piece that seems to have been used as a soundtrack. This is first of all a kind of presence for all the old fans of the band while an interesting discovery for the other ones. I personally prefer the latest songs! (DP:5/6)DP.

MOON ROCK

Charming gravity • (cd Lunar Entertainment)

The MR trio seduced me through releases like "Eclipse of the moon" and "A day like this". Their danceable, catchy synth-pop has been always a pleasure to listen to, so you can easily imagine I was really wondering what this new opus would bring us. Well, "Charming gravity" is probably the less convincing release of the list! It all remains danceable and pop like, but there's not this touch of magic! The new songs become a bit more wafting, while accentuated by the sensual whispers of Jemma. It doesn't take away that some of these songs are pretty well done. The "Goodbye, I love you"-piece is a real floating piece of electronic sensuality with some background techno vibes. This is definitely the way I like MR the most! Another attention grabber is the "Brother, sister, lover"-cut. There's an impressive bass line running through this cut, like characterizing more into EBM-orientated song. The wafting atmospheres are emerging from most of the songs, but leaving me a little bit disappointed about this evolution in style. There's just one more song to mention, which is simply the best one! Glis made an excellent, stumping body mix of "Everyday superstar", driving MR into the realms of techno-body power. It's not bad at all, but I expected the real break through by this new album... which I'm afraid, will be not true! (DP:6 CLJ:5)DP.

MORTIIS

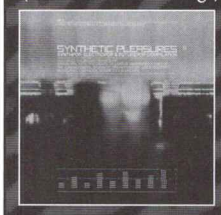
The grudge • (cd Earache)

More or less 3 years after the previous long player (cf. "The smell of rain"), the darkest lord of darkness comes back with this astonishing "The grudge". I remember the kind of shock I got when discovering the rock orientation of "The smell of rain", which sounded like a break with the past. "The grudge" now reveals an increased and improved 'rock'-production, which may remind to the crossover style of Ministry and NIN. The opening piece "Broken skin" directly illustrates the duality between tough and merciless guitar riffs accompanied by furious rhythm patterns at one side and slower and quieter parts at the other side. This is the successful receipt that made NIN and Ministry what they're today. Well, Mortiis doesn't sound the most innovative one, but the sound remains however damned efficient! We're going through merciless waves of guitar power and background electro effects. I therefore like pieces like "Decadent & Desperate" and "Le petit cochon sordide". My personal favorite is the more refined title-song for the angelic female backings recovering the harsh power of the composition. "The grudge" is a very accessible release, revealing the huge talent of this Prince of darkness. Mortiis will be on tour all over Europe during the months of October and November (40! Dates are already planned). (DP:7)DP.

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 07

SYNTHETIC PLEASURES

(cd Infacted Recordings)



This is definitely one of the best electronic samplers in quite a long time. 12 bands from the Infacted Recordings and A Different Drum stables have been selected for more than 60 minutes of pure dance sensation. Nearly all the bands are originally involved into synth-pop music, but all the songs of this sampler have been mixed into real dance club power. There's a mix between synth-pop and pure dance music. The opening cut by the Italian Syrian is a real masterpiece. This Italian technician already surprised me by his fascinating and ultra-danceable debut-cd (cf. "De-Synchronized") while this "Extended mix" of "Space overdrive" is a devastating cocktail of trance and body-pop music. Iris goes on with a mix of "Annie would I lie to you" by Toy. It's a very cool dance-pop piece just like other cuts by Namnambulu, the "Dreamtraveller mix" of "Until you say you are" by System 22 and the "Rapture"-cut by voice Industrie. In a more powerful way, we get the "Syrian mix" of Cosmicity's "Sedgwick" and the EBM-trance "Nevarakka mix" of The Dignity of Labour's "Xrv". Droom delivers the big beating and danceable "While we can"-track. A few other bands like The Echoing Green, Endanger and Monolithic are pretty enjoyable while the "Studio live mix" of B!Machine's "Blue" ends this great compilation in some house-minded tunes. This is definitely a sampler to put your finger on! Excellent music! (DP:8/9)DP.

MOUSE ON MARS

Radical connector • (cd Sonig)

It took a lot of time to the MOM-duo Andi Toma – Jan St. Werner to write and release their new album, but "Radical connector" is now a matter of fact. MOM for sure belongs to the cream of innovative and progressive composers of the past decade. They already gained a lot of recognition all over the worlds while getting a serious reputation in the electronic and experimental scene. I personally often considered the German project as a poppier and more accessible version of Autechre. They're experimenting with similar decomposed structures and rhythms, but the jazzy and pop influences are refining the brute construction of the basis. This new album doesn't sound really different, delivering some anarchistic sound puzzles like "Mine is yours", "Spaceship" or yet Blood comes" next to more 'main stream'-pieces like "Wipe that sound" revealing some catchy elements and the jazzy ambient like "Send me shivers" featuring delicious, sensual female vocal parts. In a different style, "All the old powers" sounds like a wink to some hiphop styles while still heavy experimental and reminding me to Matmos for the other influences. MOM definitely remains a singular project that defies all kind of established musical boundaries... but maybe the traditional pop music first! (DP:6/7)DP.

NEUROTICFISH

Bomb • (Mcd Strange Ways)

A bomb, that's precisely what is needed revitalize the future-pop style! This genre, which has been set up by bands like VNV Nation, Assemblage 23 and Neuroticfish (to name the most important ones) seems to loose a bit of his power and credibility during the last year so the "Bomb" of Neuroticfish can maybe explode the dancefloors again. The title-song is for sure a cool piece of heavy danceable and carrying future-pop like Neuroticfish has been used to deliver. There's no real surprise, but just the essential ingredients to makes a song become a potential hit. Next to the power, we get a poppy and carrying chorus, refined bleeps and the outstanding vocals of mastermind, Sascha Mario Klein. The "single edit" and "Extended"-version are quite close to each other while the "Dub"-mix sounds a bit different. The now famous 'EBM is death' sapling comes already back, while this mix is a bit more powerful, like more body orientated! Last, but not least, we get a 4th version of "The bomb", which is a more commercial remix by Oliver Froning. This mix is more groovy and transposed into a house club version. The 3 songs left are unfortunately real bad B-sides! The "Raw"-mix of "Suffocating right" and the "Greek symphony version" of "Care" are simply forgettable and ruining the excellent debut. The previously unreleased "No more ghosts" is a bit back into dynamism, but it all sounds like a throw-out of the previous albums! Let's now await the forthcoming and announced new full length, which seems to be like a challenge for a style in search of a 2nd breath! (DP:7 TSF:9)DP.

NIK PAGE

Dein Kuss • (Mcd Wansee Records)

After the debut-album (cf. "Sacrifight") of the Blind Passengers frontman, we now get this maxi as appetizer for the "Sinmachine"-cd. The title-song goes on the same line as "Sacrifight", revealing hard guitar riffs merged together with carrying and pop-like chorus lines. Nik Page reminds us this way that he has been active in a pure synth-pop band for numerous years. The sound of his solo work is like a bridge between the early years of Blind Passengers and latest releases, which were much more into guitar power. "Dein Kuss" is a remarkable guitar-pop cut full of energy and refinement. The mix by Lemuria is a piano-like version and an acoustic approach of the song. The 3rd version is a featuring with Joachim Witt who has been invited as guest singer. The other pieces left are "Black mail generation" and "Mephisto", which are both quite similar in mood and style with "Dein Kuss". We get no real surprises here, but this maxi is quite entertaining to await the album! (DP:7)DP.

ONETWO

Item • (EPCD ThereThere)

On this release, limited to 2000 copies, we find back the joined efforts of Claudia Brücken from Propaganda and Paul Humpfreys from OMD fame. With 5 tracks this EP is a taster for the forthcoming album that will be released on a larger scale. As you can read in the interview we had with the band this EP was originally only available via ebay, but it was sure more than worth it. The 5 tracks (including a re-take of the opener "Sister") are one by one pearls including the Martin Gore co-penned "Cloud Nine" that turned out to be a very moody dark track with direct guitar interventions by the blond Depeche Mode frontman. Some of the tracks are exactly what you'd expect from Propaganda at their best, such as "Signals", and what comes to you as a surprise, such as "Cloud Nine". A very promising teaser for the full album... (BVI : 8) BVI

PALOMA IM BLUTE

Erazor Of Life • (cd Sonic Malade)

Paloma Im Blute is the new sexy and fetishist sensation of the Sonic Malade label. A new band composed by the cute female singer Geniquia and a certain... Tom, but this front hides a more famous name, David A. Line (Soko Friedhof/Untoten). The result of this collaboration is a dark and gloomy electro pop and clash with sometimes a slight dose of guitar here and there. The concept doesn't stop to the music, so let's also underline the convincing work around the artwork. (CX:6) CX.

PARADOXX

Atomika • (cd Cold Fusion Music/A Different Drum)

The American based Paradoxx already delivered some cool surprises and now comes back with this "Atomika"-long player. The debut songs "Atomika" and "Catwalk" reveal the most 'commercial' side of the quartet, which combines cool house and techno tunes together with some guitar riffs. The cyber-kinky-punk image of the band perfectly fits into their sound, but Paradoxx did here much more than flirting with commercial standards! The next piece entitled "Radium lover" is a little bit more pop-minded while full of filtered bleeps and a kind of trance feeling. This band proves to have different sources of inspiration, but the album remains pretty compact. "Mysterious" moves already in other influences, mixing big beats together with groovy sequences and acid bleeps. The most powerful track (cf. "Teknologi") is a bit more into heavy guitar parts and definitely the ultimate cyber-punk cut of "Atomika". We also get a surprising remix, which has been made by Mimetic and that's not exactly a band you would expect to remix this band. Anyway, the remix of "Atomika" sounds pretty dark! Last, but not least, we also get a kind of pc clip, featuring several parts of different songs. This is a real enjoyable album full of dance power! (DP:7/8)DP.

THE PARALLEL PROJECT

Explicit • (Mcd Out Of Line)

I was eagerly awaiting this new project set up by one of the electronic geniuses of the past years. The title-track has been written by Alex Matheu (Negative Format) while the vocals has been done by guest singer, Tom Shear of Assemblage 23. It seems that other guests will appear on the album. The music sounds pretty close to the trance-electronic-pop style of Negative Format while T. Shear sings in his usual and brilliant powerful pop style. Next to the original version and the remarkable "Club edit" and "Radio edit", Accessory did a raw mix. "Explicit" is definitely a great piece of electronics! The "Motive"-song is another

collaboration. Rashree Devi Matson joined forces with Alex Matheu, delivering a slower piece, but which is much more than a b-side. You can easily recognize the style while A. Matheu took the vocals for his part here. This is a well-done debut, which seems to announce a promising upcoming album! (DP:7/8)DP.

THE PARALLEL PROJECT

Fusion • (cd out of line)

I've thought for years how novel an idea to have one respected producer or artist lend his skills to an array of vocalists within the scene. A few years ago, Russian DJ Ram released his Virtual Server to mixed results. Some tracks simply worked, some didn't. I feel similarly regarding this project. Alex Matheu of Negative Format fame is an incredible programmer. No denying that. This guy can incorporate a multitude of electronic styles (dn'b, breakbeat, ebm, techno, synthpop) into one cohesive framework so seamlessly, he makes it seem easy. For Parallel Project, he dutifully recruited a stable of the who's who in the underground electro realm and had them contribute their pipes to his compositions. An even mix between familiar female crooners like Jennifer Parkin and Kristy Venrick trade off with the stud factor: Ned Kirby, Daniel Myer and Clint Carney (amongst others). Several tracks are fun listens, but don't demand repeat spins simply because the lyrics/melodies themselves aren't terribly interesting. A few outstanding pieces such as Tom Shear's 'Explicit' and Darrin Huss' (Psyche) 'Space & Fiction' mesh the music-with-the-words formula very well. And who would have thought Mark Jackson of VNV could actually carry a tune in key? 'Fusion' is great dancefloor fodder, has charted well with DJ's and clubs, but may be too intense for casual listening. (DK:7 TSF:8) DK.

PHENOTRACT

Within a second • (cd Tinman)

Phenotract is a project set up by Eric Shans. He got some help for the production by Isaac Glendening of Cesium 137. The "Within a second"-album is an interesting debut, revealing a modern approach of electronic music. The electronic structures are based on EBM influences while recovered with a flavor of pop. I don't really want to compare them with any other band, but Neuroactive is definitely a name that comes into mind. Production wise, I'm getting wild of the vocal production. The vocals are like a whispering ghost in a sensual mood, adding a personal attitude to the global concept. Musically speaking, Phenotract takes care to switch harder and danceable beating cuts like "Twilight haze" and "Lunartrip" with refreshing pop parts like "Freezetime" and "Skydomes". I perceive real strong and deep sounding bass lines while a few cold bleeps create a moody feeling. "Red glow" is another remarkable song for the kind of triphop rhythmic in conjunction with the cool bleeps and very particular effects that have been used here. The "Distant voices"-song remains in the same line while "Neosymmetry" moves a bit more into future-pop ingredients. There's definitely a lot to experience on this debut, which is auspicious for the coming chapter of Phenotract! (DP:7)DP.

PHILOSOPHER'S POINT

Nachtangst • (cd BLC Productions)

This has been a great year for BLC with so many great releases. Philosophers Point from Germany whose career in music began in 2001 is just another one to add to the BLC label. Balancing between aggressive industrial EBM and even some synthpop the band has really pushed their programming to different degrees of intensity on the new CD "Nachtangst". The vocals seemed to have more of a darker flare that works well with their darker beats, and are both in English and German. A more gothic vocal approach is on "Rueckkeher," which starts off slow between the intense and complex programming sets in. The vocals also had two sides because sometimes the vocalist, Christian Muller would come across clearer and other time with more distortion. He definitely makes for a good frontman. There is a lot of power and it sound great. "Biology of the Year," is a big track for the band and is one of many power EBM tracks that sends many shockwaves to you while listening. Also added to this track was more gothic metal guitar laced between the pounding EBM which you will hear many times throughout Nachangst. Some of their music reminds me of a cross between Das Ich and In Stict Confidence. This CD is non-stop energy and is a very noticeable feature with the band. The CD also has many different speeds, musical composition changes within their songs. Songs that I would recommend from this album would be "Biology of the Year", "Bekenntinswut", "Egopflege", "Eternity- Infinity" and "Hints". Very impressed with this release and you should be hearing this band on dancefloors across the globe. (JJ:7/8) JJ.

PLEASURES REMAIN

Magmatears • (cd Pandailectric)

This is one more band joining the wide and international army of synth-pop. I really like the title of this album, which sounds like poetry in my ears. The music perfectly fits into this emotional mood, but can't totally get me wild. PR focus on slow and emotional pieces, but that's probably not the easiest way to get into the picture. From a pure technical point of view, this album is a real meaningful clear production, but I'm like missing some outbursts! It's all easy listening music with now and than some noticeable cuts like the moody "Hall of shame" featuring female backings. The "Meeting you" is another noticeable song for moving a bit more into rhythm and power. It sounds as a welcome variety in this quiet environment of the "Magmatears". Another cut I want to mention is "Orange dreams", containing some worthy sounds and bleeps. Last, but not least, the "Pretty girls"-song has been recorded and mixed by José Alvarez-Brill, but the content is unfortunately not really inspired! This is a pleasant listening, but there's nothing more to say! (DP:5)DP.

RENAME

You don't deserve my love • (MCD A Different Drum)

With Rename the US Synthpop label has found a band that could well become their next Iris, great male vocals on top of catchy beat driven synthpop. Indeed one of the best synthpop releases for this year I would say. On this 7-track MCD we get the title track in 5 versions and two extra tracks "Maybe later I will fall" and "Love is a cool cat", both of which do hold very well the road and that are excellent album tracks for sure. Notice that one of the remixes has also been made by DJ Ram that offers an even more upbeat version adding the extra punch to the song while Provision adds an electro-twist to the material in their Double-Crossed mix. Iris fans and related: rush to your PC or laptop and order it from A Different Drum at www.adifferentdrum.com ! • (BVI : 8/10)

SAMUEL JERONIMO

Redra - Ändra - Endre de Fase • (cd This.Co)

The title of this album stands for the 3 songs of the tracklist. SJ delivers 3 long-during pieces, which are extremely minimal and therefore extremely hard to endure. This artist combines long parts of xylophone-like play with heavy and bombastic neo-classical piano parts. There's no real use of any other instruments neither any single rhythmic. The "Redra" piece is a torturing cut that goes on for more than 30". Well, let me tell you it was nearly impossible to endure this kind of incomprehensible experiment. I'm getting nervous and totally out of my mind, but the 2 tracks left aren't different! This is pure mental torture without real substance! The pieces are constantly like repeating themselves, switching from the piano to the xylophone sound. This is too bad to be true! www.thisco.net (DP:1)DP.

SANDBOX TRIO

Urubamba • (cd Frank Mark Arts)

Hailing from San Francisco, here's the new album of the ST. This project moves into the wide and endless fields of ambient music, but creates a very own approach by the implant of tribal elements. Their approach sounds quite fascinating on songs like "Das Wasser und die sonne" and "Black currents". Both pieces combine a mysterious ambient coldness together with tribal-like rhythms. It's just a pity that the entire album doesn't sound in the same vein cause this is real good stuff. The main pieces move into pure soundtrack impressions. There's nothing wrong with it, but it's sometimes too exaggerated and especially when it goes on for more than 12 minutes like on the "Ghost waves"-cut. The title of this piece perfectly defines what you'll hear, but a few seconds would have been enough to realize what it's all about. There's just the "River's end"-song that is strong enough to get me awake thanks to the low tempo rhythmic. "Urubamba" possess some real interesting parts, but the main tracks aren't terribly inspired! www.frank-mark-arts.com (DP:5/6)DP.

SEABOUND

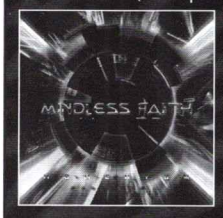
No Sleep Demon v2.0 • (cd Dependent)

Seabound seized the opportunity that Metropolis was to release their debut album in the USA to remaster "No Sleep Demon" and fine-tune the mixing of some songs like "Exorcize", "Torn", "Hooked" (Radical Mix), and "Avalost" (vocal version). Indeed these last 2 songs mean that there are bonus tracks on this re-release! Some compilation tracks as well as the vocal version of the beautiful "Avalost" from their now deleted "Travelling" maxi were added to the original 10 tracks. The booklet also got 4 pages more and a re-

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 08

MINDLESS FAITH

Momentum • (cd Dependent/Metropolis Records)



It's been four years since Mindless Faith released their incredible album, "Manifest Destiny", an excellent fusion of American coldwave and contemporary European club sounds. "Momentum" proves that a lot has changed since 2000 as Mindless Faith has shifted from an angry, aggressive outfit to one that's much more moody, changing its mind from track to track like someone who is off their medication. Gone are much of the guitar elements that the last album was known for; in their place are manipulated electronics and vocals that are stretched and played with in order to suit each moment. The pacing is also dramatically altered throughout, with club friendly beats giving way to toned-down industrial grooves, which in turn gives way to a drum & bass interlude, and so on and so forth. Fuzzy guitars do make their way onto two tracks here, aiding both the hard-driving refrain of "This is the Last Time" and the early '90s Wax Trax throwback, "If Not Now, When?". As a whole, "Momentum" doesn't grab the listener as quickly as its predecessor because it breaks traditional categorization by being neither a club album nor a rocking album. It's predominantly a collection of dark and morose industrial songs with a few accessible tracks interspersed. Definitely an album that works better in the background at home rather than in the foreground of a club scene. (RH:7 TSF:8/9) RH.

designed artwork. And to thank their fanbase, Seabound and Dependent have decided to issue this European re-release as a low-price album... If you would not have this brilliant album in your collection yet, grab this new opportunity with both hands and enjoy the transparent electro pop of this very talented duo. (TSF:9) TSF.

SIDERATICA

Shapes and colours from the land of God • (cd Trisol)

Sideratica is a project set up by Elena Fossi. The familiar ones will immediately know that this is the 2nd full length of the female singer of Kirlian Camera. Elena became part of this legendary Italian combo since 1999, but seems to like walking on other and different ways, which she experiences on Sideratica. Her way of singing and the typical timber of voice will unavoidably remind to Kirlian Camera, but the music is a bit different. Sideratica is more the kind of music you'll like to listen to while sitting in a cosy canapé. The strings are often like melodies coming down from heaven. That's what I experience on a song like "Lucy Pharr's may". My favorite pieces are more into rhythm and into the 80s as well. The "Shapes from the land of God"-piece sounds definitely like evoking the 80s wave movement while "Circle of the angels" is probably the most original and efficient piece. This is definitely more into electronics and even the vocals have been manipulated by a vocoder. A piece like "Antland" comes closer to Kirlian Camera. There's a lot to experience on the "Shapes and colours from the land of God" while the sensual voice of Elena will take you in a world of reverie. (DP:6)DP.

SNOW IN CHINA

Electromensch • (CD Out of Line)

From the intriguing introduction track to its final piece, "Electromensch" is one of the most original and fulfilling albums of recent months. Just enough synthetic ambient soundscapes float atop beats, not-to-harsh, with plenty of warm and original sounding synths and vocal effects combining for a very unique debut album. It is difficult to pick favorite tracks on this disc due to it's continuity and quality. There is a distant theme of soft melancholy throughout, and an honest sense of songwriting. Every song has a purpose, leaving no room for filler. I love the vocal and chorus effects in "Blackbox" and "The Dreamer." "Eyes in the Dark" and "Mindsucker" exemplify the electro elements of the Snow in China sound, while "In My Head" delivers for the fans of darker electro-industrial like fellow label-mates Hocico or Solitary Experiments. "Sick" and the title track demonstrate the many atmospheric effects used in the album. A timeless and professional debut! (MEM:7) MEM

SOMAN

Revenge • (Mcd Out Of Line)

After the excellent debut-cd "Sound pressure", Soman is nearly close to deliver us the 2nd full length. This maxi is a kind of cookie to appease our hunger. Hmm, I easily recognize the hard mix of typical EBM influences and harder industrial elements, but this Mcd however can't fulfill all my expectations. The opening cut "Ignition" is a powerful piece of electronic terror built up with a typical dry EBM bass line, but I here regret the total absence of vocals. Next comes the "Tears"-cut featuring Lahannya. Well, this girl is adding a surprising angelic touch through her voice to the harder electro-industrial composition. It's just a pity that music isn't really elaborated and even remains quite simplistic! That's what really starts to suffer on the "Instrumental"-version of the song. There's nothing wrong with simplicity, but this is maybe a little bit like abusing in simplicity! The last song is the "Live edit" of the title-song. It's a cool piece of music that sounds in the line of the debut-cd. Soman avoids any complexity, but the power of the composition is efficient this time! Let's now await the cd to get a better idea about the evolution of this band. (DP:6/7)DP.

SUPERIKONE

Opiate • (cd Upscene)

Superikone aka Malte el Niño is not unknown in our scene. Apart from this solo electro-pop project, he is also a member of the band Lunastoy and had remixed numerous bands such as We-play, Dizamé, De/Vision. Supoerikone who will open for the aforementioned cult e-pop band, is a less ambitious project than his main one and even if it seems that his label put him as their top priority act for the moment, the production is less refined and sometimes very rough. Malte sings only in German and he is sometimes helped by a feminine voice which is not a bad thing, but apart from this, this is nothing groundbreaking! (CX:6/7) CX.

SYNAPTIC DEFECT

Mechanical Oppression • (CD BLC prod)

The first album of this German dark electro project got off to a most auspicious start with an excellent intro called "Nuclear Storm", this title resume perfectly the ambience. The scene was set thought I, but the "Surgical Bombs" were only damp squibs, the ambience of the intro hasn't been reproduced and the harsh distorted voices didn't saved the track. I've had to wait 'til "Imperfection", its uptempo beat and duality between dark and clear electro. Slower, but darker, harsher and more distorted, "Gun Murder" is a perfect example of the ambience that SD can create in the image of "Nuclear Storm". Well, Synaptic Defect shows an interesting creating potential but the good moments are too few. It's a first album, let's wait the next to judge. (PF:6)PF.

SYSTEM SYN

Premeditated • (cd Out Of Line)

This is one of the latest signings on Out Of Line! SS is a trio that definitely strives on originality, but which unfortunately can't convince the entire album long! It starts however in a remarkable and terrific way by the great "Momentary absolution"-song. This is an interesting dark electronic approach characterized by a poppier chorus. The next piece is again worthy of examination! "Glass" is the most intriguing cut of "Premeditated". There's a kind of cold and sterile vibe running through it while the sound-sculptures have been built up with damned good cold bleeps. "Indifference" comes next, evolving into a more powerful sound. I like the kind of duality in the sound of SS. There's a constant form of darkness running through their work while the melodies and vocals are definitely closer to pop music. The "Would have killed"-song is one of the best examples of this ambiguity. Well, I've to add that after the promising debut cuts, the next songs are bit more into quieter realms and less fascinating! The last song that caught my attention is the "All that now has left your reach"-one. This is definitely more pop and even moving on the border of future-pop while it still remains to several bands of A Different Drum like Cosmicity and Count To Infinity. There're some real cool parts, but still uninspired ones on this debut. Just let's keep an eye on this band and see how they'll evolve! (DP:6)DP.

TRISOMIE 21

Happy mystery child • (cd Le Maquis)

This is one more ghost that has just awakened after a long rest! The legendary French T21 comes back with a complete new album! Referring to the opening song "Red or green", I get the impression of experiencing a total metamorphosis! This is an excellent track combining sensual rhythms, cool wave vibes and half spoken, half sung vocal parts. It all sounds like T21 has tried to reinvent their own sound, but that's just true for this single piece! The other cuts are more like diving back into the glorious decade of new-wave and The Cure

as main source of inspiration! Those Frenchies have never been my favorites, but I have to recognize that this is maybe my favorite album of their discography. I've been positively surprised by the originality of the rhythmic, which remains quite sensual. It's just a bit strange to combine this rhythm with pure guitar wave. The guitar and way of singing are definitely Cure-like, but a few pieces like "Midnight of my life" and "Forsaken mysteries" still contains some vague techno bleeps. There's some modernism in a way, but T21 remains for sure faithful to their roots and original style! I've some reservations about the potential success of this resurrected combo, but some survivors of the dark wave period will for sure enjoy it! And the diversity delivered by the remixers featured on the 2 bonus discs of the limited edition bring a plus and a modrn touch to it all... (DP:6 TSF:8)DP.

TROISSOEUR

3s • (CD EMI/Zoku)

Out on Zoku, the folk sub-label of EMI Belgium, is the newest album of the Belgian string quartet Troissoeur. For this release the band joined hands with Front 242 brain Daniel B. who took care of production, mixing, drums, percussion, loops and soundscapes and finally also handled the mastering of the release. It resulted in 9 tracks that have reached a wider sound than what we could hear on the band's previous efforts, the CD "Trah njim" and the DVD "Levina". Away are the folk ingredients that kept the band alienated and too focused on folk itself, instead the material on this album is fully born to reach international markets. I'm inclined to say that this is one of the best releases so far that I have heard from Belgian soil for the moment. Those who want this release only for the Daniel B. alliance, please do not bother unless you have an ear for acoustic music and a heart for organic sounds. Note that a promo only single has been taken from this album, namely "Curoon". (BVI :8) BVI

TYPE001

Multi-Track Alignment (CD DSBP)

"Multi-Track Alignment" is the debut album of Boston's Matt Ossen, but I'm sure this guy's not a newcomer when I hear how he manages with ability and consummate skill all sorts of electronics. Each track has a complex structure full of variations which keep intact the attention of the listener from the first notes to the last. He blends with a disconcerting facility ebm, dark electro, techno, acid-trance, breakbeats, drum'n'bass, ambient, using with discretion but efficiency background female vocals and alternates upbeat and down tempo tracks. I'm impressed! (PF:8)PF.

UNIVAQUE

Converted • (CDS promo SSC/Playground/Warner)

With their previous single, Univaque already presented themselves as truly inherit of Erasure and Yazoo. You can add Depeche Mode as well as "Converted" sounds like it was taken from "Speak and spell", even the vocals have been treated in the same way (the let's-sing-together-into-a-climax to name just one). Targeted at those that want to revive those fine days. Let me remark that the image of the band inclusive a German war helmet and beards does not coincide with the sound... very weird guys those univaquers! (BVI : 7) BVI

UV

Codebreaker • (CD BLC Productions)

Let's meet the Ohio based UV who has just released their debut album "CodeBreaker" on BLC Productions which is already climbing the charts and you will quickly see why after a listen to it. This is an explosive release with a mix of industrial and aggressive EBM. When you listen to this album you will get a mental picture of circuit breakers and electricity. "CodeBreaker" has more of a colder industrial sound, distorted vocals mixed with many danceable beats. "CodeBreaker" is perfect for the cyber industrialist on the dancefloor. Within the mix of "Codebreaker" you will hear their darker side and their aggressive style that you might hear in bands like Suicide Commando. Another great part about this new release is that Relic has brought in the influence of film music and sample such as "Rise up you dead, slain of the Hydra, rise from your graves and avenge us" from the movie the movie "JASON and the ARGONAUTS". UV has really made this CD diverse and should attract many listeners. Songs that I would suggestion listening to would be "Radio Dead" for the incredible programming and "Hydra" for the more -darker side of the album but yet danceable. The title track "Codebreaker" and "System Sabatage" are also stand out tracks for UV. Dark, powerful, diverse, and driving beats, are just some ways to describe this CD and this is a must have. (JJ:7/8) JJ.

VENUS FLY TRAP

Zenith • (cd Big Blue Records)

After 5 albums and a 'best of', comes the 6th full length of the British Venus Fly Trap. Their sound and influences has considerably evolved throughout the years, but VFT still holds on some damned good-old wave ideas. I like the dark atmospheres running through their work, creating a kind of unique guitar-gothic approach that we're not used to hear from British bands. Among the sources of inspiration for "Zenith", the duo Alex Novak (vox) – Andy Denton (composition) went back to old black & white movies like the famous "Metropolis" and "Dr. Mabuse". I don't always find the link between their sf-orientated influences and their sound, but that's not the main point I'm afraid so. "Zenith" is an album you'll buy because you're fan or because you simply like the sound... whatever the lyrics are all about and inspired of. It all works well on tracks like "Metropolis" and "Mercury", but on the long run it slowly starts to annoy me. The music isn't really what I can describe refreshing and that's the main point after a while. Anyway, the band still has a small army of followers and they'll be probably fully satisfied. www.spiralarchive.com (DP:5/6)DP.

VIDNA OBMANA

Anthology 1984-2004 • (cd Ikon/Projekt)

Time is running fast! The Belgian artist VO is celebrating his 20th anniversary, which stands for 2 decades of an impressive number of releases! But "Anthology" isn't the usual kind of 'best of'-release. It all seems closer to the revelation of hidden songs... and not hidden at all! Most of the songs are previously unreleased on cd-format, but already appeared on tapes. It was quite usual in the 80s and 90s to release material on tape and there were even several underground tape labels. VO collaborated with several of these labels, evolving in time and in style. VO moved in different influences, covering styles like ambient, experimental, industrial, tribal and even noise. I personally appreciated the dark and mysterious ambient side, which of course comes back here, but my favorite cuts are without a shadow of a doubt the more tribal-dub stuff of the recent years. One of these pieces is the opening cut "Shallow faith". I'm really fond of the cold, mysterious mood of this piece, getting in the grip of the background Eastern flavor. The next pieces "Second praise for last hope" and the "The nocturnal air" are more into the usual ambient style while "Ecstacy" from the early 80s is definitely more into noise fields. Well, we got 4 tracks for so far and already realized the different influences running through the work of VO. You can for sure perceive a difference in time where the 80s have been characterized by a raw and brute sound in comparison with the 90s stuff, which was more floating. Most of the cuts have been extract of the 80s, which is probably due to the difficulty to get the original tapes and work where these songs have been featured on. "Soul dislocation" brings us back to recent years and the enigmatic dub style of VO. The live version of "Abundant rain" is again one of these little pearls of the ambient approach of the 90s. With the "Assimilate"-cut, we get a last composition from the last years, showing all the secrets of the Middle East. This is a very good idea to get a bit more familiarized by the long career and the sound of Vidna Obmana! (DP:7)DP.

VIRGIN PRUNES

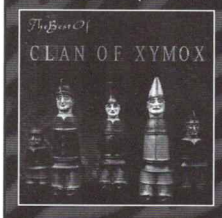
An Exhibition • (cd mute)

It's been announced for a while know on the band official website that Mute was about to re-release the complete back catalogue of that highly influential band from the late seventies, early eighties. 5 new remastered and redesigned album are currently aiming at the record store bringing a new life to the Irish band discography, including several never-seen before pictures as well as a few unreleased (but oh so valuable) material (including the rare new form of beauty 4 and the first singles). If you except some barely official re-releases, this is the first time that the whole catalogue sees the light of day on cd format and this compilation offers some extracts from the coming cd re-releases. Besides being the one and only compilation available from this "unmissable" and essential band, this "exhibition" gives us a glimpse at the re-mastering work and provides us with several pictures as well as a biography of the band. Pagan Lovesong, Baby Turns Blue, Come To Daddy, Love Lasts Forever are among others tracks which evoke the magic and intensity of the VIRGIN PRUNES. Others tracks are missing and could have landed on this cd (I just think of Caucasian Walk, Down The Memory Lane or Sweethome Under White Clouds) but we'll have to wait for the albums to re-discover the full and complete collection. (CF: 9) CF.

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 09

CLAN OF XYMOX

The Best Of • (cd Pandaimonium)



Although their remix album was quite pleasant, this 14-track "best of" album beats it without too much effort! 14 essential songs sum up in beauty the Dutch band's prolific career from their 4AD debuts ("A Day","Stranger","Louise" or yet "Muscoviet Mosquito",all having by the way been re-recorded for full impact on your senses!) until their most recent hits including the unavoidable "Jasmine and Rose","There's No Tomorrow" or yet "Out Of The Rain".We'll also notice new versions of "I Want You Now" and "Into Extremes".CLAN OF XYMOX excel in dynamic darkwave music and we wish them to continue bringing us as many great moments as they have done so far for at least the next 20 years... (TSF:9) TSF.

VIRTUAL><EMBRACE

Escape To Insane • (Ltd 2CD, Alfa Matrix)

Virtual><Embrace the latest project of Mike Johnson, tattooist and founder of Infekktion (1998), Sero.Overdose (2002) and Agonoize (2003). Johnson's work as Virtual><Embrace is characterised by hard punishing power-noise beats and highly distorted vocals. Virtual><Embrace is aimed square at dancefloors worldwide and the hard driving beat and demonic vocals are a testament to that theme. "Escape To Insane" is Johnson's debut album for Alfa Matrix – and indeed for this project – and is released in traditional 1CD and limited 2CD formats and has been precluded with a limited DJ CDEP called "Roots of Evil" featuring exclusive remixes. Bearing all the hallmarks of current dancefloor trends,"Escape To Insane" is unashamedly euphoric and infectious. Adding a new dimension to Johnson's work is the limited second CD featuring no less than 13 remixes by a range of likeminded artists. Most of the remixes give Johnson's work a less powerful but more dancefloor oriented edge with reworks of particular note by None.One ("The End"), Lethargy ("Acquaintance"), Dunkelwerk ("Acquaintance") and Neikka RPM ("The End"). Amusingly, Sebastian Schleinitz's rehash of "F... You!" is like listening to a tribute to VNV Nation. But maybe that's the joke! (PL:7 TSF:8/9) PL

VOX CELESTA

Mandorla • (cd Infacted Recordings)

Some of you maybe discovered VC on the "Infacted Vol.1"-sampler. Here now follows the "Mandorla"-album, which starts in an impressive way with the tracks "Du allein" and "Falscher Gott".This project combines EBM power together with hard danceable electro-pop components with well-crafted bleeps and effects. The point is that after this promising debut, "Mandorla" stagnates and even falls down in flat electro-pop structures. The bass lines are pretty cool and body minded, but that's definitely not enough! They here and than try to accentuate the club-feeling like on "Schreien",which is driven by big beats, but I don't see any potential club track in it. "Ein Freund" moves a bit more into melodious tunes, but once again I'm missing a real substance. It all remains too similar in ideas and even sounds. We finally get one more acceptable piece, which is the hidden track entitled "Du". I would dare to say that this is a typical German electronic combo (also due to the German lyrics). There's definitely still a lot to work on and to improve here! (DP:6)DP.

WOLFENMOND

Flammenspiel & Schattenklang • (2CD Sad Eyes / Trisol)

With their 4th album to date the dark folk/medieval act Wolfenmond (German for Mouth of the Wolf) offers a double CD digipack stuffed with material. Included on the second CD are, for instance, 6 tracks that date back from the band's sold out debut album "Mantica" which have been completely re-recorded. Apart from that disc 2 also holds a multimedia track and a remix of the "Samsas Traum" track. The 15-track new album brings what you could expect from Wolfenmond, dark folk pieces in German language. I have personally never been a big fan of Wolfenmond for being too straight in their approach without exploring new paths. But then again, some will adore this part of the band. For fans. Nice digipak though with 2 booklets holding together 40 pages filled with pictures and info. You also get an additional sticker within. (BVI : 6) BVI

XANDRIA

Ravenheart • (cd Drakkar Records)

Second album from this German gothic metal band whose seducing female singer links them to the likes of bands such as NIGHTWISH, WITHIN TEMPTATION or yet the more recent Leaves Eyes project. If you like those above mentioned bands XANDRIA has the right soundtrack for you. Enchanting female vocals are surrounding a clean gothic metal music whose production has landed in the hands of mastermind José Alvarez-Brill. The result is highly polished (too much though here and there) and aimed at becoming a new reference in the genre. Unfortunately, to the exception of a few noticeable tracks, the core of the album falls into huge clichés and lacks a bit of density. They know their lessons well but miss the essence and personality that could help them become a major band. It all sounds so artificial that even potential hits such as Ravenheart or Some Like It Cold do not manage to save it. (CF: 5/6) CF.

X-FUSION

Beyond the pale • (cd Scanner/Dark Dimensions)

Jan Lehmkämper aka X-Fusion has already been active for numerous years with his project. He released an impressive number of demos while regularly moving in style. After his official "Dial D for demons"-debut, he now strikes back with the darker than the night opus "Beyond the pale".This album becomes a real acceptable piece in the purest tradition of dark EBM. X-Fusion doesn't really try to innovate or add a lot of personal touches to his music. J. Lehmkämper simply composes the music he seems to love and that's probably Hocico and Suicide Commando on top of the list! Well, it's not a pure cloning, but there's no real surprise... except discovering that we're facing a German project. The atmospheres and cold crystal-like tunes are often reminding me to Hocico. There's a similar kind of darkness in the atmospheres. From a pure personal point of view, I regret the lack of originality. Even the lyrics are more than dejà-vu... referring to some extracts like "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust" that appears on the "Ashes to ashes"-track. That's a pity because the more you walk into the agoraphobic universe of this composer, the more you feel that his dark electro is quite credible and club-minded. I personally appreciate cuts like "Left hand path", "Dear God", "Nothing to loose", "Mammonism" and "Rest in pieces". It's just a pity that none of them have this little detail, which often makes a hit! Anyway, this album is real gorgeous food for all black electro heads! (DP6/7 TSF:7/8)DP.

XOTOX

Die Unruhe • (Mcd ep Pro Noize/Dark Dimensions)

"Lichtlos", the debut-cd of the German Xotox-project got a considerable response in the dark-electro realm. "Die Unruhe" is an ep containing 15 cuts, which sounds like an xxl size! The songs "Mechanische unruhe" and "Nasse Wände" are both like the main tracks of this special maxi. Let's first concentrate on the original versions. Both pieces are quite similar for their influences and style. This is harsh and merciless distorted electro-industrial power with the name of Feindflug as closest source of inspiration! I personally prefer the "Nasse Wände"-track, which sounds a little bit more elaborated. Several artists have remixed both pieces. About "Mechanische unruhe", we get a more worked-out mix by Heimataerde, a poorly inspired remix by Absurd Minds, a repetitive, but danceable electro mix by Cycloon and a forgettable remix by DJ Joy - Kashino. Mindware and Ohmkill have remixed "Nasse Wände" in a forgettable way while Jesus Complex worked out the structure by adding a few cool sounds. Next we get 6 more songs, which is a nice gift especially for a maxi! Among these songs, I notice the hard bouncing "Pumpe/Düse" and the simple, but damned efficient "Stammzellenforschung.""Paderborn" and "Gottlos" are both quite cool as well while the last cut entitled "Dunkelheit" is probably one of my favorites of the record. I really like the cold bleeps, adding some more complexity to the structures, which remain too often predictable and simple. I'm afraid Xotox will never become a damned original and complex music project, but their cliché dark electronics will for sure ravish lots of dark EBM lovers! (DP:6)DP.

THE YOUNG GODS

Music for Artificial Clouds • (cd Intoxygene)

Their last album "Second Nature" and the concert which I had the chance to attend left me literally voiceless. This 2k comeback was the one of the sampler addicts, of the real sound geniuses also, so rare now."Music for Artificial Clouds" will, without any shadows of doubt, disturb more than one

fan. This one is just... instrumental, without rhythm, in brief it's relaxing ambient music of an amazing purity. Since the first sounds, we escape the reality to be at the mercy of the various surreal moods and images which pass before our eyes... only the last second will deliver you. A surprising album of an enormous beauty. (CX:8 TSF:6/7) CX.

ZODIAC PROJECT

Yearnings • (mcd Urgence Disk)

ZP is a one-man project from Switzerland helped by additional musicians. This ep contains five tracks and three videos. The first track begins with an ambient intro on which come real drums and jazz sonorities and spoken words. The second track is instrumental and more experimental turning around jazzy percussions. The third track "Gelatin(z)" is my favourite song, more pop-electro in the vein of Radiohead's last period, to hear absolutely. Next track, reminds me Mercury Rev's world, a kind of experimental pop. The last studio song is a kind of hypno-psyche-pop song, Primal Scream is not far. Eclectic and original. (PF:7)PF.

DARK AWAKENING VOL. 4

(dcd COP International)

This series has done a fine job of creating a regular outlet for the discovery of new and established artists in the realm of gothic and industrial dancefloor songs. Volume four is no exception, actually causing this "industrial dj" to spend an equal amount of time listening to the "gothic" cd and the "electro" disc. The first cd, the "electro" side starts off with a sure fire dancefloor hit as Spine of God does its rendition of Depeche Mode's "Stripped." This is followed by another heavy hitter as Mr. LaPlegua's Combichrist gives us "God Wrapped in Plastic." We cannot over look some of the other well known artitsts on this compilation who definitely contribute to a good electro-industrial side...Grendel's "Pax Psychosis" hits hard as do tracks by Psyclon_Nine and Rotersand. Also, S.I.T.D. lends a hand by remixing a song by Sleepwalk called "Hackerstate." Other standouts new to the scene include the Apop influenced November Process, Vox Celesta (who contribute a song and a remix of the Cycloon track) and Agonoize. Next comes the "gothic" disc which definitely had some surprises for me... the electro fan. Many of the artists contributing to this side have composed excellent pieces that actually remind me of earlier days when the goth/punk/industrial scenes seemed a little more mingled with fewer boundaries constricting each genre. Antiworld's track titled "Devil's Rain" certainly brings the strength of its live shows to your home stereo with a touch of the old "punk ethos," a plus for any good goth artist. Frank the Baptist, from California, also shows us how the deathrock underground is still strong. Unafraid of wearing their influences on their collective sleeve, The Mist of Avalon also have a strong showing with "This Time." Other stand-out tracks are included by Necromantik Sunshine, Beautiful Deadly Children, Astrovamps, Faith and the Muse and Hatesex. The greatest strength of the "gothic" disc is its diversity. In all this collection brings the listener 33 tracks by as many artists, put together by long time German dj and promoter, Dirk Neveling. For more info check out www.copint.com (SR:7/8) SR.

INFACTED VOL.1

(cd Infacted Recordings)

Set up by Torben Schmidt (Lights Of Euphoria), we've already discovered some interesting names on this young label. This sampler is a good way to get a bit more familiar with some bands of the label and different other formations of the EBM and electronic scene. The tracklist features 16 bands with a majority of pop-orientated items. Most of the songs are remixes and maybe not familiar for everyone, which I think is a plus! Namnambulu opens the fire with an acceptable "Tagtraum mix" of "Moments". The next band is Iris and they're for sure the real 1st highlight with the cool and danceable "Lost innocence mix" of "Vacant". Endanger, Frozen Plasma, State Of the Union and Vox Celesta (the latest signing of the label) go all on the poppier side. None of them can really convince me although it all remains pleasant to listen to. Glis comes next with the "Infacted version" of "No pulse". This heavier body-future pop piece is my personal floor killer of this sampler. It's full of power while catchy at the same time! Massiv In Mensch goes on in their usual trance-body direction with the "Nino Cortez remix" of "Dark rave". The "Namnambulu remix" of Monofader's "Why?" is a cool remix full of beating pop elements. A last recommended track come from Optical Frequence, featuring "Light me" remixed by 8khz Mono. I just regret the poor production of the mix. Among the other bands, you'll find names like Liquid Divine, Unitary, Null Device, 8khz Mono, Heimataerde and last, but not least The Azoic. The Azoic is for sure one of my favorite bands of the last years, but the "COM_Link remix" of "Lost" doesn't really sound inspired! This is for sure a sampler on which you can discover a mix of new names and young talented bands of the scene! (DP:6 TSF:8/9) DP.

INDUSTRIAL, FOR THE MASSES VOL. 2

(CD – Out of Line)

"Are You Ready to Move", that is the question and with this compilation, I can most definitely give you the answer - YES! Out of Line has returned with one of the best electro-industrial dance compilations of 2004. Harsh dark electronics, technoid rhythms, distorted beats all compressed into one compilation! This red-hot baby includes exclusive material from Soman, Combichrist, Kiew, Hanin Elias, Rob Acid, Dulce Liquido (Racso side-project of Hocico) and much, much more. This is a dj's wet dream jam packed full of dance floor hits. The limited edition contains a bonus cd with four naughty treats from the new project unterArt. Trust me, you cannot go wrong with this bad boy. Pick it up today and enjoy some of the best new electro-industrial out there. "Go and get the future of Industrial!" (kj:9/10) kj.

MY DEAR FREAKS

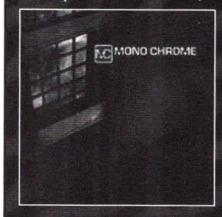
(CD Caustic Records)

My Dear Freaks is a compilation featuring dark Spanish bands in the ambient, dark folk, neoclassical and ritual genres. Released as a collaborative effort between Caustic records and la defuncion, their goal is twofold. To encourage the discovery and promotion of Spanish bands while promoting dark culture and unity through photography, film, art and music. Many unfamiliar bands are featured alongside more recognizable names such as O'Paradise, from the Aorta or Eis & Licht labels. This is a solid, well-balanced release and definitely something to consider for fans of the aforementioned genres. Recommended for those

HEARTBREAKERS TOP 10 → 10

MONO CHROME

Collapse and Sever • (cd Cryonica)



A collaboration of Victoria Lloyd (Claire Voyant) and Clint Sand (Cut.Rate.Box), Collapse and Sever represents the first output since Mono Chrome's inception in 2002. With Lloyd's background in ethereal and Sand's electro skills, the combination falls between these two fields. In "Awakened", synths burble the disc to life as a driving beat invokes Lloyd's sultry, distinct vocals. The chorus certainly sucks one in, and while Sand's instrumentation lacks Cut.Rate's aggressive edge, her lush voice fits perfectly with his commanding dance structures. Even more engaging is the upbeat stomp of the aptly titled "Riveted". Frenetic sequencing and distinct snare hits flow sublimely with this hybrid of ethereal pop and traditional EBM. This is the pinnacle piece, and a nice remix by Assemblage23 at the album's denouement only solidifies its stature. From its vocoded intro, the relentless thump and twitter of "Liquid High" is perhaps the heaviest track here, with emphasis falling on its racing rhythms. There's also pieces like the bassline trance of "Sold", which strongly remind me of the Claire Voyant remix album, Time Again. Other pieces like the pensive trip-hop of "This Death" are also quite lovely. While diverging from the dance anthems, it cannot be mistaken as filler, especially as this particular song brims with slices of ear-catching distortion at its heart before gradually vibrating into silence. While all the tracks are graced with Lloyd's impassioned and rich vocals talents, Sand's synchronicity with her within the dance anthems shine with excellence. Dance-friendly, yet sensual, Mono Chrome have delivered here an excellent debut that successfully diverges from their other bands with its own seductive sound. (VM:8 DP:7) VM.

interested in finding new, quality talent within the dark scene.(j:8) jules.

ORKUS CLUB HITS 6

(cd Zoomica/SPV)

Frequently, our colleagues of Orkus gratify us with a compilation which collects all the current in bands of the moment. Once again, you'll only find the best of best with the presence of the dark electro band of the year, The Retrosic, the surprising collaboration between NamNamBulu and SITD, let's add Rotersand, the amazing comeback of Skinny Puppy, the half Icon of Coil / Monofader, Clan of Xymox, Punto Omega and finally one of my favourite electro acts of all time... PNE. Only big names for a big compilation. (CX:7) CX.

SYNTHPOP CLUB ANTHEMES 3

(cd A Different Drum)

This is already the third volume of the compilation published by the famous American label that honours all the current biggest electro-pop hits formatted for the underground club. Once again we find the more than confirmed talents of the moment like De/Vision (remixed by Icon of Coil), Daybehavior, Toy, Neuropa, or the comeback of Real Life,... Let's add some excellent newcomers like Syrian, The Dignity of Labour and this list is almost filled. They have just one sentence for you... "Move your ass and dance!" (CX:7 TSF:9) CX.

UTURN 3 / BLANK + MOONITOR THE DARK SIDE OF THE BEAT

(cd Artoffact)

I'm totally addicted to this series of progressive electronic music, which started, which started with "An exploration in trance" (featuring Massiv In Mensch + Negative Format) and followed by "An exploration in techno" (featuring Headscan + Implant). The 3rd chapter is the meeting between the Italian Blank and the Norwegian master of EBM, Sebastian R. Komor aka Moonitor. Let's start with Blank. Most of you maybe ignore that this band got involved into pure gothic (cf Headrops) before setting up Blank and turning their interest into pure EBM. If you already discovered their "Artificial breathing"-album, you for sure already experienced and enjoyed their fine taste to mix classical EBM basis together with pure progressive techno-trance vibes. They here go further into a heavier techno and trance club direction, asking Massiv In Mensch to remix "Afterburn" and Rotersand to remix "Visual overflow". Both are real attention grabbers, but I personally prefer the amazing "Data gram", revealing impressive techno bleeps and other effects. There're a few vague words in the background, creating a dark-like sensation. A next impressive piece is the instrumental version of "Mutant engine". Just like the opening cut entitled "Dead end" (which contains some vocals), Blank builds a bridge between EBM and trance. The construction sounds really solid and quite impressive from a pure clubby point of view! Over now to Moonitor, showing a different side of Sebastian R. Komor's talent and abilities (mastermind behind Icon Of Coil). While still awaiting the debut album of Moonitor, we already got the chance to discover the style of this project. Sebastian goes much more into techno, house and trance, realizing very diversified, but fascinating pieces here. "Telescope" starts in a good bouncing way full of techno tunes, house tricks and trance structures. The "Skydiver"-piece is a little bit more into wafting structures. The space mood of Moonitor excels in the cool "Horizon sun"-track where some sampled sensual female vocals are adding an extra plus to this devastating floor killer! The "Darkside of the beat"-cut comes closer to the EBM roots of the composer, without being a copy of Icon Of Coil or any other EBM group! And the best is yet to come with the final song entitled "Non human". This is an incredible piece of techno power full of acid bleeps and ending in pure trance ecstasy! This sounds like monitor at his best and only confirms the potential of this progressive project! This new series of Uturn is already a must have! Simply brilliant! (DP:9)DP.

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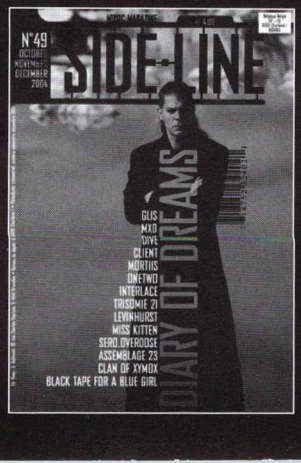

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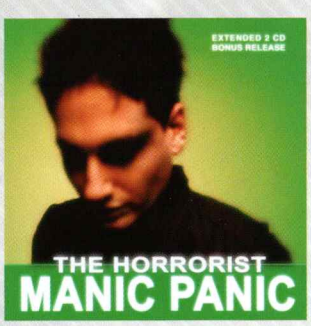
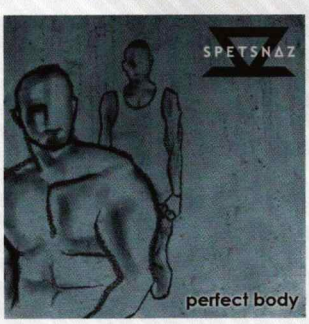


The Horrorist "Manic Panic"
This special OUT OF LINE 2CD-release not only includes the 'Manic Panic' album, but also gathers most of his singles and remixes, including the international hits 'One Night in NYC', 'Can you hear the sound' and many others. 26 tracks on 2CDs! A hammer release between Aggressive Electro, Industrial and Techno!



Spetsnaz "Perfect Body"
Classic, old school EBM, powerful vocals, frenetic pounding bass lines and relentless rhythmic assault! Now the second attack with new songs and remixes!

Blutengel "No Eternity"
The new single with the exclusive non album track "No Eternity".
Contains also remixes of Blutengel clubhits from Cephalgy and In Strict Confidence

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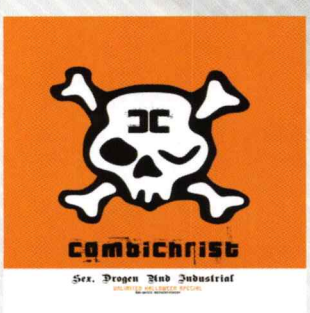
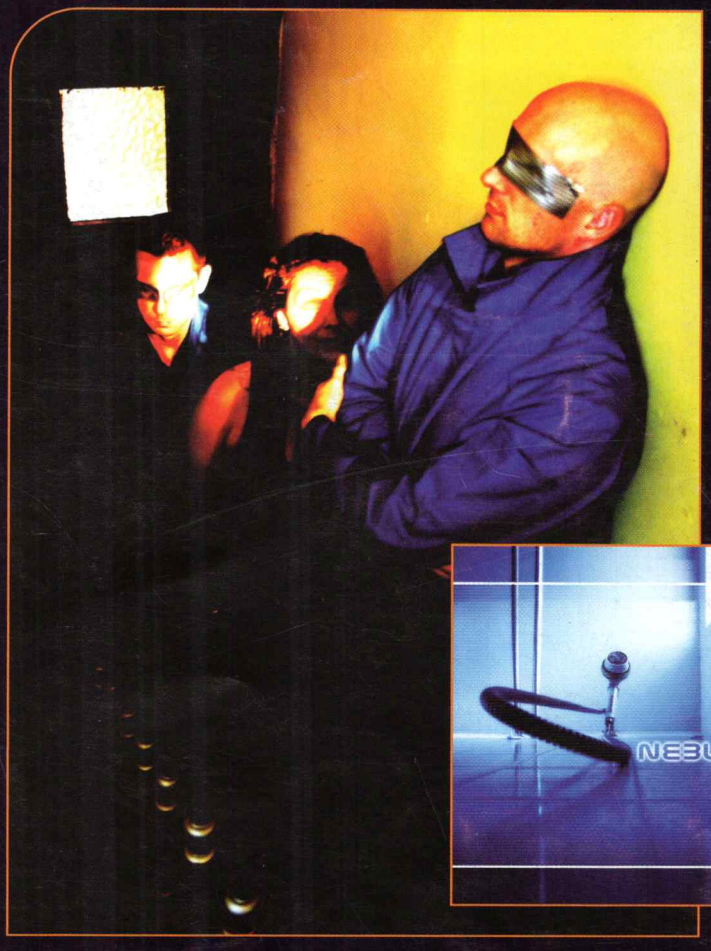


CombiChrist "Sex, Drogen und Industrial"
The all new minialbum of Andy LaPlegua (Icon Of Coil). This is for sure the next big thing! Super danceable Electro in a unique and outstanding style and quality!!!!

Destroid "Future Prophecies"
The ultimate floorfiller: A mix between Oldschool EBM, Power Electronics and modern electronic music from this new german band incl. Daniel Meyer of Haujobb!!



NEBULA-H

. H20 .

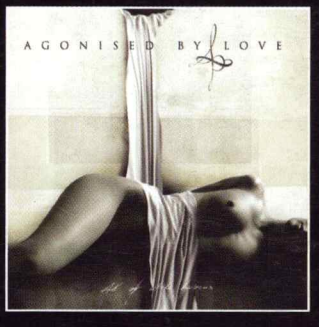
2nd album by our Belgian rising stars offering a unique explosive cocktail of eclectic electronics, carrying modern beats, Deranged Psyche's mysterious lyrics and the mature production work of Mika Goedrijk (THIS MORN O'MINA, AIBOFORCEN, etc.). Take FRONT 242's strong EBM roots, PRAGA KHAN's unique sense of melody, and JUNO REACTOR's rhythmic magic, with a teaspoon of techno/house feel and you get the ultimate nu-H-body music of NEBULA-H! The limited edition (500 copies!) of the album holds an exclusive bonus DVD.

hungry lucy

. To Kill A King .

On their 3rd album, HUNGRY LUCY traverses the musical spectrum from sombre darkwave to catchy pop through more upbeat trip-hop moments and other melancholic acoustic / piano songs. It offers a beautiful mixture of emotional female vocals, electrified song writing and a driving DEPECHE MODE-styled production. Cold and glowing at the same time, this new CD is full of contrasts and passion.

AGONISED BY LOVE



. All Of White Horizons .

This duo from Poland offers us orchestral and romantic arrangements lead by touching expressive vocals reminiscent of THE CURE or yet DEPECHE MODE. A mixture of CLAN OF XYMOX's catchy dynamics, DIARY OF DREAMS' mysterious depth and DEINE LAKAIEN's classical allure. Danceable electronics mixed with classical romantic darkwave for a very beautiful album speaking to your soul...

DIVE

. Behind The Sun .

Belgium's electronic legend is back with a new dynamic album! Haunted by Dirk Ivens' unique vocal style, DIVE's new lingering entrancing electro / industrial arrangements collapse against dynamic distorted rhythmics. "Behind The Sun" will rapidly reach the cult status of "Concrete Jungle" and mark one more milestone in DIVE's impressive discography.
Be surprised!

Pressure Control

. Vamp .

PRESSURE CONTROL is the new project of Gin Devo (ex-VOMITO NEGRO keyboardist), another legendary figure from Belgium's glorious EBM movement. One of the most ambitious and promising EBM/elektro projects of the moment offering futuristic sonic perspectives to dark electronic music. A very solid addition to the Daft Records stable.

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